



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

354th meetingTuesday, 19 January 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Acting Chair: Mr. Seck(Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Acting Chair: I declare open the 2016 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

Draft provisional agenda for the 2016 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/L.75)

The Acting Chair: As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of the Chair and other members of the Bureau for 2016.

I wish now to draw the Commission's attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.75.

Agenda item 4 in the draft provisional agenda should be amended, as the resolution referred to in the agenda item has already been adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 70/68). I therefore submit the draft provisional agenda to the Commission, with the understanding that agenda item 4 therein is to be amended.

I give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco): Based on the Chair's amendment to the draft provisional agenda with respect to agenda item 4, I think the item should now read "Review of the resolution of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission" or "Review of the

resolution of the seventieth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission". In other words, the words "submitted to" should be removed.

The Chair: Taking into account the proposal of the representative of Morocco, shall I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.75, as orally revised?

The agenda, as orally revised, was adopted.

Election of the Chair

The Acting Chair: In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of Asia-Pacific States that has the honour of nominating the candidate for the post of the Chair of the Commission for its 2016 session. I have received an official communication from the Chair of that Group, informing me that the Group has reached an agreement on the nomination of the Ambassador of Vanuatu as the candidate for the chairmanship of the Commission for its 2016 session.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Ambassador Odo Tevi as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chair: On behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, I congratulate Ambassador Odo Tevi, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, on his election to this high office. I express the commonly

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shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from his wide experience and diplomatic skills. We wish him success in discharging his newly assumed important duties. For our part, we will remain at his service with support and counsel, as necessary.

With those brief remarks I invite Ambassador Odo Tevi to take the Chair.

Mr. Tevi (Vanuatu) took the Chair.

The Chair: At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the members of the Commission for electing me Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to acknowledge the important task entrusted to me to chair this organizational session. I also want to thank the Chair of the 2015 session for the kind words and wishes addressed to me. I count on the support and cooperation of all Member States in achieving the important goals ahead of the Commission.

Before turning to the next item on our agenda, allow me to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2015 substantive session, Ambassador Fodé Seck, for the excellent guidance and leadership he provided to the Commission. My gratitude also goes to other members of the Bureau for their valiant and tireless efforts. And finally, let me thank delegations for their constructive spirit and cooperation during the previous session of the Commission.

We continue with the third item on our agenda, namely, the election of other officers of the Disarmament Commission for 2016. As is the case with the chairmanship, other officers of the Bureau are elected on the basis of the established principle of rotation. Accordingly, it is the turn of the Group of African States to nominate a candidate for Rapporteur of the Commission for the 2016 substantive session and one Vice-Chair.

Now I would suggest that we proceed to the election of Vice-Chairs. I was informed that the consultations are still going on within the regional groups on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur. We can address this issue at a later stage.

Review of resolution 70/68 adopted at the seventieth session of the General Assembly

The Chair: As members of the Commission are aware, the General Assembly has adopted one resolution that has specific bearing on the work of the

Commission. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of members of the Commission, I would like to refer to that resolution.

Resolution 70/68, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", was adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh plenary meeting on 7 December 2015 under agenda item 99 (b). The relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution, namely, paragraphs 5, 6 and 9, read as follows. Paragraph 5 reads:

"Welcomes the fact that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492, at its 347th meeting, on 7 April 2015, the Disarmament Commission adopted the provisional agenda for its substantive session of 2015, on the understanding that consultations would continue on ways and means to implement resolution 69/77, and that the Commission decided that the agenda for its substantive session of 2015 should serve for the period 2015-2017."

Paragraph 6 reads:

"Recommends that the Disarmament Commission continue consideration of the following items at its substantive session of 2016: (a) Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; (b) Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons."

Paragraph 9 reads:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2016, namely from 4 to 22 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, and stresses that the report of the Commission should contain a summary by the Chair of the proceedings to reflect different views or positions if no agreement can be reached on the specific agenda item deliberated on, as provided for in paragraph 3.4 of the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission."

I have just outlined the resolution, which contains the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission.

I open the floor to those delegations wishing to make a statement or comment on anything I have said so far.

Mr. Volgarev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the Disarmament Commission for 2016, and we wish you every success in the work to come.

The Russian Federation advocates activating the work of the Commission as an integral part of the United Nations disarmament triad — the Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee of the General Assembly.

The objectives and functions that were assigned to this forum at the tenth special session of the General Assembly, including reaching agreements on the control of armaments, disarmament and non-proliferation, are required more now than ever before. We are confident that the expert potential and the long years of experience in the Commission can be utilized effectively to resolve problems in the area of international security and global stability.

We have long had serious concerns about the actions of a number of States undermining the existing disarmament mechanisms by trying to establish such parallel structures as open working groups with the stated aim to duplicate the work of the Disarmament Commission. Logic dictates that it would be sensible to concentrate on activating the unrealized potential of the Commission, considering its practical scope. Without question, the Commission is aware of the problems that are impeding its work and that of the other parts of the United Nations' disarmament triad. First and foremost, there is a lack of political will to identify priorities in addition to the approaches of Governments.

We are therefore ready to consider constructive ideas to kick-start the activities of the Disarmament Commission. However, we are opposed to any initiative to correct the rules and procedures. The rules of consensus are at the basis of important decisions concerning armament, disarmament and non-proliferation, which are connected with sensitive aspects of guaranteeing military security for States. Russia is convinced that, considering the experience of work within the Commission, it is fully able to provide a high-quality product on the basis of the existing rules and procedures. The General Assembly has also adopted decisions to improve the Commission's

working methods. We assume that the agenda adopted at the 2015 session of the Disarmament Commission are also appropriate for this year as well.

Having said that, we would like to receive some explanation about the status of the issue of adding a third item to our agenda, and also the outcomes of consultations with States, which the previous Chair of the Disarmament Commission intended to hold in the intersessional period. The Russian Federation is ready to look at specific proposals related to the addition of a third agenda item, which would enjoy consensus support from States and allow us to invigorate our forum. For our part, we would like to consolidate the agenda by including the issue of weapons in outer space.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your election and assure you of our cooperation and support. Briefly, with regard to the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 70/68 on the report of the Disarmament Commission, we too believe that political will is crucial to any agreement reached in the Commission and elsewhere. In particular, the Commission works on the basis of consensus, and I believe it should continue to work on that basis. That is very important.

We also think that improving the working methods of the Commission can facilitate further our efforts towards any agreement by consensus. That includes implementation of the resolution, especially paragraph 2, which encourages the revitalization of the work of the Commission in its current triennial cycle. It also includes continued efforts towards an agenda that will favour more focused deliberations and discussions. That is something we agreed on and that can be found in paragraph 3 of the resolution, which emphasizes the need for a focused and result-oriented discussion on items of the agenda of the Commission. The same applies to other operational paragraphs, including paragraph 9, which also includes some measures that are important in taking forward the work of the Commission.

Again I reiterate our support to you, Mr. Chair, and I thank you.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): We appreciate your nomination, my dear colleague and friend Ambassador Odo Tevi, and we are confident that Your Excellency will be an able leader in making this Commission a reliable disarmament entity to provide future input for the 2017 preparatory meeting of the 2020 review conference of the parties to the Treaty

on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Please accept, on behalf of my delegation and on my behalf, our sincere congratulations on your nomination and appointment.

I am aware that this is not a forum for the Chairs of the Working Groups to speak and present reports. I therefore do so in my national capacity and represent the views of my delegation, which is genuinely committed to the rationale and process of the Disarmament Commission and its organizational aspects.

I thank my colleague and friend, His Excellency Ambassador Fodé Seck for convening this meeting to prepare and set the stage for the forthcoming session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission this April. As Mr. Seck prepares to step down, I would like to commend his stewardship during this difficult phase of very polarized views, especially on agenda item 4, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", and I am particularly thankful to Ambassador Fodé Seck for having asked me to preside over Working Group I, which I was honoured to do under his guidance.

It is critical that informal consultations on the agenda and work programme of the Commission be held between now and April so that the agenda and business are more or less shared in advance and no precious and very valuable and limited time is taken once the meeting commences and the substantive business can start right away. My country will be happy to share its experiences with you, Mr. Chair.

In terms of a few practical suggestions, let me say that we observe that there is a general agreement on the broad objectives and principles of disarmament, but the devil lies in the details vis-à-vis the approaches over which there is a radical difference between various groupings, especially in Working Group I, as was clearly demonstrated during the voting on resolutions in the First Committee and the General Assembly in December last year.

We would like to suggest that the forthcoming meetings be structured in the way that the Working Groups revert back to the practice prevailing until 2013, with meetings scheduled for only half days and then meeting daily so the remainder of the day is used for consultations and drafting. Since, as was mentioned, we are presiding over Working Group I, I intend to hold intensive consultations between now and

April with as many interested key players, experts and regional groups as possible. Representatives are asked to pay due attention to the letter that I am sending to my colleagues, Permanent Representatives of their countries.

While many delegations, at the start of 2015, wanted a third item on the agenda and although it is desirable, it depends on the pace at which each Working Group proceeds. It all depends on the spirit of cooperation and the speed at which delegations want to move. Though these additional items can be envisaged, it is only in April 2016 that we can have a realistic appraisal as to whether or not they can be included.

Allow me to also mention that all Member States could take inspiration from the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in September, and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and, later in the capital of France, the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. I am mentioning these agreements because there were vast differences, but yet Member States came together to work for a common goal, considering the critical times. There is no other option but to take a unified stand, considering the threat of nuclear detonation and terrorism by State and non-State actors. We need to work on elements that unite us and then build the documents accordingly. Therefore, let us pay due attention to all those aspects.

I assure you, Mr. Chair, that Kazakhstan will support you in facilitating a meaningful and optimal process.

The Chair: I would like to thank the delegations for their comments and suggestions. I will engage in consultations with the Chairs of the Working Groups and the broader membership and revert back to the issues raised at a later stage.

Provisional agenda for the substantive session of 2016 of the Disarmament Commission

The Chair: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the provisional agenda for the 2016 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.76.

It was so decided.

Organizational matters

The Chair: The United Nations Disarmament Commission is a subsidiary body of the General

Assembly and meets annually. Its sessions are financed from regular budgets and do not require additional funding. Moreover, in accordance with decision 52/492 of 1998, the annual substantive sessions of the Commission should last three weeks. As a result, during the 2016 session, the Commission will work on the basis of our usual practice, namely, a full three-week session. With this in mind, and based on resolution 70/68, the Secretariat has arranged for the dates for the 2016 substantive session from 4 to 21 April.

I should like to note that, pursuant to resolution 44/119 of 15 December 1989, all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, as I have already informed the Commission, we are not in a position to conclude these organizational matters in view of the following outstanding vacancies: one Vice-Chair and Rapporteur from the Group of African States and two Vice-Chairs from each of the following groups: the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group of Eastern European States, the Group of Latin American

and Caribbean States, and the Group of Western European and other States.

As members can see, it is a tall order and I would like to use this opportunity to appeal to the regional groups concerned to conduct all necessary consultations in order to enable the Commission to start its substantive work, as planned, on 4 April with a full Bureau. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to conclude this organizational session and give the Chair and delegations time to carry on further consultations on these issues and to take them at an appropriate time.

If there are no more pressing issues to discuss, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to conclude the 2016 organizational session and to resume the unfinished organizational business at the first meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on 4 April.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

355th meeting
Monday, 4 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi(Vanuatu)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair: I declare open the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

I would like to inform everyone that Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, is on his way here and will be joining us soon. We will hear his statement to the Commission later on. For the time being, I would now like to offer some thoughts on the work ahead from the Chair's perspective.

The Disarmament Commission is beginning its work this year in a very challenging international environment. There are growing tensions in many parts of the world. Disagreements and rivalries persist among States. Deadly conflicts continue unabated in various regions. Threats of terrorism and cyberattacks add to instability and insecurity throughout our planet. In the shadow of such a security climate, multilateral disarmament has continued to face serious challenges, with increasing signs of decay and decline. Lacking mutual trust and confidence, States are retreating from disarmament negotiations. The 2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons concluded without agreement on a substantive outcome document. Last fall, the First Committee held its most recent session in a highly polarized atmosphere, with many resolutions adopted by deeply divided votes.

In that context, the Disarmament Commission has a critical role to play this year in restoring trust among States and rebuilding confidence in multilateral disarmament. The disarmament machinery provides a mechanism for promoting dialogue and building confidence among States. As the specialized deliberative subsidiary body of the disarmament machinery with universal membership, the Disarmament Commission enables in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues. Through such deliberations, member States can engage in constructive dialogue and free-wheeling discussions, with a view to finding common ground for advancing the disarmament agenda.

Fortunately, the 2016 Disarmament Commission begins its work on the heels of the first substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I was heartened that the Working Group held very productive discussions in a constructive atmosphere. The active participation of many delegations during the week-long meeting has not only raised expectations for the prospects for agreement on a possible fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, but has also created some much-needed positive energy in the area of disarmament. I sincerely hope that this constructive atmosphere will also prevail in our work in the coming three weeks and create momentum for revitalizing the work of the Commission, as well as that of the disarmament machinery as a whole.

It has become a cliché that the disarmament machinery, particularly the Conference on Disarmament

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and the Disarmament Commission, is perpetually paralysed. It has been 20 years since the Conference on Disarmament last negotiated a multilateral treaty. It has been 17 years since the Disarmament Commission last adopted guidelines or recommendations. However, I wish to remind the Commission that during the period from 1979 to 1999, the Commission adopted, by consensus, guidelines and recommendations on various disarmament issues 16 times. That is why I am convinced that the Disarmament Commission will be able to agree on substantive outcomes during the current three-year cycle. So I wish all members the very best as they commence their work toward this goal. I earnestly hope that we will have a turning point for multilateral disarmament soon.

I shall now take up the provisional agenda for the 2016 substantive session. Members of the Commission may recall that, at its organizational session on 19 January (see A/CN.10/PV.354), the Commission took note of the provisional agenda for the 2016 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.76.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.76.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of other officers

The Chair: As members will recall, the Commission has yet to elect Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur from regional groups.

I have been informed that consultations are still ongoing within the Group of African States, the Group of Asia and Pacific States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and other States on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairs, and we will take up the election of Vice-Chairs from these Groups at a later stage.

At the same time, I am pleased to inform the Commission of the following endorsement received. The Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Mr. Tigran Samvelian, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Armenia, as Vice-Chair from the Group of Eastern European States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Tigran Samvelian as Vice-Chair of the Commission of the 2016 substantive session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: Allow me, on behalf of the Commission, to warmly congratulate the newly elected member of the Bureau and to wish him success in discharging his duties. I am sure that he will make an important contribution to the smooth work of the Commission this year. On a more personal note, I would like to mention that I shall count on his support and counsel.

I have also been informed that His Excellency Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, and Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of Morocco, have expressed their interest in continuing to chair Working Group 1 and Working Group 2, respectively.

May I take it that the Commission takes note of the fact that His Excellency Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, and Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of Morocco, will continue to chair Working Group 1 and Working Group 2, respectively?

It was so decided.

Organization of work

The Chair: I would now like to bring to the attention of the members of the Commission the schedule of meetings contained in document A/CN.10/2016/CRP.1, which has been disseminated in the room.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the schedule of meetings as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/CRP.1?

It was so decided.

The Chair: Before we take up the first order of the day, allow me, on behalf of all members of the Commission, to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who will provide substantive support to the session of the Commission. His presence here today underlines the importance of the Commission in general and the high expectations of Member States for this session in particular.

It gives me great pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Kim Won-soo.

Mr. Kim Won-soo: I want to bring to the Disarmament Commission the greetings of the

Secretary-General. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Tevi on his appointment as Chair and thank him for inviting me to address the Commission at its opening session. I believe that Member States will give him very strong and complete support.

Secondly, I also want to thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Seck, for his excellent leadership in 2015.

Finally, I also wish to express my gratitude to the Chairs of the Commission's two Working Groups, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan and Ambassador Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco, for their tireless work in 2015.

The Disarmament Commission is entering the middle phase of its current cycle during a time of deepening paralysis and divisions within multilateral disarmament bodies. These disappointments are well known to us all, from the 2015 NPT Review Conference, our inability to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and the lack of any further negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. Against this backdrop, it is no wonder that many have looked outside traditional United Nations forums for progress. Yet the Commission has considerable potential to demonstrate again that the existing disarmament machinery can produce results.

Now I would like to speak about the two agenda items the Commission has been working on. The first is the item on conventional weapons. In recent cycles, the Commission has made important progress towards consensus on its conventional weapons item. This has come as the international community has made important strides forward on this part of the disarmament agenda. These have included the first-ever legally binding regulations governing the international arms trade, greater success at combating the illicit trade in small arms, dealing with the problems posed by excess and poorly maintained stocks of ammunition, as well as agreeing to tackle new challenges such as the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. We have also continuously made progress in the improvement of its confidence-building mechanisms in the field of conventional arms control, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. I hope the continued deliberations by the Commission on its conventional arms item builds upon and consolidates these gains. The time has come for the Commission to

start finally bringing its consideration of this item to a successful conclusion.

Secondly, on the matter of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, however, the gap remains wide. Over the past 11 months, views on the way forward have grown increasingly polarized and entrenched. Work will resume next month in Geneva on the elaboration of effective legal measures for nuclear disarmament. Even as that process continues, the Disarmament Commission still maintains a unique and distinct role, especially in the light of its history of consensus-building. In this regard, I encourage representatives to make use of the unique nature of this body as a deliberative and consensus-based body that continues to enjoy universal participation. This dynamic should enable them to pursue constructive dialogue involving all key stakeholders. It should also be aimed at bringing us back to a common vision on how to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

I would now like to move on to a possible third agenda item. The need for simultaneous progress on multiple questions of disarmament has never been more apparent. We are faced by the rapid emergence of new trends and technologies that are complicating strategic relationships and stability. This includes the development of advanced new types of strategic weapons. It also includes a growing nexus between terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and cyberthreats.

Areas where the United Nations has recently made progress include addressing the challenges of outer space security and sustainability and clarifying how international norms pertaining to hostile and malicious acts apply to cyberspace. Of these, the issue of outer space is especially ripe for consideration in a universal body. In 2012, on the initiative of the Russian Federation, the General Assembly established a Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. That Group successfully concluded its work in 2013. The General Assembly subsequently referred its report to the Conference on Disarmament, the Commission and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in its resolution 68/50, which, in a demonstration of unity on matters of strategic security, China, the Russian Federation and the United States jointly sponsored.

In October 2015, the First and Fourth Committees held their first-ever joint ad hoc meeting on addressing

the challenges of outer space security and sustainability (see A/C.1/70/PV.13). The meeting proved useful but ultimately revealed that further dialogue was necessary in order to reconcile the contending visions for outer space security.

The Disarmament Commission has clear authority to adopt a third agenda item at any point during its cycle, provided there is consensus. Furthermore, it has a mandate to consider such an item during its present cycle, under the terms of resolution 69/77, in paragraph 5 of which the Assembly "recommends that the Disarmament Commission intensify consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda ... keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item". Finally, resolution 70/68, adopted in 2015, explicitly provides for the continuation of these consultations in the context of the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Chair to explore common ground so that agreements on a third agenda item, possibly addressing outer space, can be achieved. Deliberations by the Commission on this issue may help to consolidate and carry forward various proposals to ensure that space remains free from conflict and unsustainable practices.

Taking up a third agenda item should not and will not detract from the Commission's work on its two existing items. Rather, it would bring the Committee back to greater productivity, thereby restoring its credibility as an essential component of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

I hope that representatives are able to make use of this session to be innovative, break out of siloed ways of operating and demonstrate the ability of the Disarmament Commission to achieve tangible and practical results. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to assist representatives in any way possible.

I wish the Commission all the best for a successful substantive session.

The Chair: I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his statement.

General debate

The Commission will now start the general exchange of views, based on the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I would ask those

delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible, as we plan to conclude the general debate tomorrow at 1 p.m. In order to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views segment, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that have already inscribed their names on the list to keep in mind that the rolling list implies that they should be prepared to intervene at any time, possibly even sooner than they had originally planned to speak. I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

Mr. Anshor (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I also express my appreciation to the Chairs of the Working Groups for their efforts. NAM assures you of its full cooperation in what it hopes will be a productive session with positive outcomes.

NAM underscores its long-standing position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiation in those areas. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the relevance and centrality of the United Nations Disarmament Committee (UNDC), with universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery mandated to consider specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Movement reiterates its willingness to continue working to revitalize the disarmament machinery in order for it to fulfil its mandate. In that regard, NAM considers that the Conference on Disarmament remains the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, and the Disarmament Commission remains the specialized deliberative body mandated to submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The UNDC has contributed in the past to the field of disarmament and arms control by adopting 16 guidelines, recommendations and declarations. NAM

expresses its concern at the fact that the UNDC has been unable to agree to substantive recommendations on its agenda items since 2000 due to the lack of political will and inflexible positions of the nuclear-weapon States. NAM stresses the urgent need to achieve concrete results in the current UNDC cycle and, to that end, urges all Member States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to show the required political will and flexibility. The Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to reach an agreement on substantive recommendations on the agenda items of the Commission.

NAM reiterates its deep concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States. NAM strongly calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), made during the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the unequivocal undertaking that they provided at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. NAM reiterates the continued validity of those obligations and commitments until they are fulfilled.

NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential in strengthening international peace and security. In that context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures, non-proliferation efforts or so-called strategic stability.

The Movement underlines that General Assembly resolution 70/34, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", provides a concrete road map to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament.

NAM reiterates that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be convened no later than 2018, as decided through General Assembly resolutions, would indeed provide the Assembly with an opportunity to review the progress made in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the 2013 High-level Meeting of

the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament and to intensify international efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. NAM stresses the need to establish a preparatory committee for the United Nations high-level international conference in New York.

NAM stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity of their total elimination through observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

NAM welcomes the continued consideration of the humanitarian initiative and reiterates its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and, in that context, reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, and reaffirms that any use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, as declared in numerous General Assembly resolutions.

NAM emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and, pending that, all non-nuclear-weapon States should be provided, as a matter of high priority, with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances.

The Movement underlines that all activities and plans related to improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of nuclear weapons contradict the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral legal obligation, as well as the commitments undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in that regard.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the application by nuclear-weapon States of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear-disarmament obligations and undertakings.

The Movement underlines the importance of the full realization of the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop the full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials

and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM again stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation-control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States and should not impose restrictions on access to the material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

The Movement stresses that issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in that regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

NAM States parties to the NPT regret the failure of the ninth Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. That failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. NAM States parties to the NPT stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences and of implementing the action plans adopted by the 2010 Review Conference on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM States parties to the NPT further underline that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, should be implemented without any further delay, and reaffirms that the resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference scheduled for 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East was not convened despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. That runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution and violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the commitments and obligations of the Treaty depositories regarding the Zone, as contained in the 1995 resolution and the 2010

Action Plan on the Middle East, remain valid until fulfilled. They strongly reject the impediments alleged by the conveners of the conference to have resulted in its failure to have been convened on schedule.

In that context, NAM States parties to the NPT deplore the fact that Israel is the only party in the Middle East that has rejected participation in the conference, as mandated at the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT call for the full and immediate implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East so as to avoid negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its 2015 review process and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

In that regard, NAM recalls that in the final document of the Tehran Summit of August 2012, the Heads of State and Government, while strongly supporting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, called upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps for the establishment of such a zone. Pending the establishment of such a zone, they further demanded that Israel, the only country in the region to have neither joined the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, renounce its possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards and conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. They expressed great concern about the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and ongoing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. They called for the total and complete prohibition of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of assistance in the nuclear-related, scientific or technological fields to Israel.

NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular negotiations during the Conference on Disarmament, which remains the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. NAM encourages the Conference on Disarmament to agree as soon as possible on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in order to overcome its long-standing deadlock and start its substantive work.

In conclusion, the Movement underscores its full support for the Commission's work, which must be intensified through reinvigorated political will with a view to achieving meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

NAM attaches great importance to the agenda item on "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". As a contribution to the work of the Disarmament Commission, it will submit a working paper under that item.

Mr. Elshandawily (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, the Arab Group would like to express its sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) this year. Likewise, we express our sincere appreciation to and commend both the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Kazakhstan for presiding over the two Working Groups of the Commission.

The Arab Group reiterates the centrality of the Disarmament Commission as a United Nations forum based on consensus. It aims to discuss disarmament issues in the light of the mandate authorized and defined by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, held in 1978.

The Group underlines that entrenching peace, security and stability worldwide is inconceivable in view of the presence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which pose an ongoing threat. It is thus imperative to save humanity from those weapons. We must harness the ample specialized human and financial potential dedicated to such weapons for development instead.

The Group expresses its concern over the continued failure to achieve any tangible progress in nuclear disarmament. We are concerned about the repeated failure to commit to implementing the second decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in addition to the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

In that context, the nuclear-weapon States are clearly reluctant to set any specific time frame for the implementation of their international obligations in the

area of the the complete eradication and dismantling of nuclear weapons.

In that light, and given the failure to implement the consensus resolution of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Arab Group attempted, at last year's Review Conference, to break the stalemate through a new proposition, submitted as part of the Arab paper and also supported by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. However, it did not achieve the desired objective.

A very disappointing decision was made by three countries, including two nuclear-weapon States — Treaty depositary States — that created impediments to the desired outcome. That in turn raises questions as to the determination of those countries to abide by the Treaty and respect their obligations in that context.

We therefore stress that freeing the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction is a global responsibility of which the Arab Group has assumed its share. What remains is the responsibility of other parties. Without that, the credibility of the NPT would be at stake, and the stability of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime would be threatened. Therefore, the States members of the League of Arab States have decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the relevant stances and develop an Arab strategy towards a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with the aim of maintaining regional security.

Moreover, the recent ministerial meeting of the League of Arab States, held on 11 March, established a Committee of Wise Men tasked with reviewing all Arab policies related to the regulation of armaments, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It will also submit an inclusive report containing an honest evaluation as well as recommendations and proposals on new policies aimed at achieving the Arab objectives while maintaining regional security, given the new changes and emerging threats.

The failure of the recent Review Conference and procrastination on the part of the nuclear States in fulfilling their obligations in the area of non-proliferation makes it incumbent on us, as members of the international community, to take greater strides and redouble our efforts towards the full eradication of nuclear weapons.

The Arab States will continue to positively contribute within the framework of all international efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation, by way of ongoing and effective participation in all multilateral forums on nuclear disarmament, including, recently, the open-ended working group that met in Geneva with the aim of achieving effective legal instruments to bring about a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

All of the Arab States Members of the United Nations have acceded to the NPT. They have subjected all nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, a step that Israel has not undertaken to date, despite all relevant international demands and resolutions.

In that context, the Arab States underline that the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is considered the fourth pillar of the NPT, with the same weight as the other three pillars of the Treaty. We have not seen any tangible progress in this framework since 1995, despite the fact that the decision to indefinitely extend the NPT, adopted that same year, was based on that idea.

Voluntary practical measures to build trust can contribute to promoting peace and security at both the national and international levels. In that context, the Arab countries recall the guidelines on appropriate confidence-building measures and the means of their regional and international implementation, which were recommended by the UNDC and adopted by the General Assembly in 1996.

In that context, the Arab Group stresses that eradicating weapons of mass destruction worldwide is one of the most important confidence-building measures, thus the importance of implementing the decision of the 1995 NPT Review Conference declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Fulfilling the international commitments agreed to voluntarily by countries would contribute to promoting trust among countries. Likewise, the Group stresses the vital importance of implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and enhancing the capabilities of States to combat that very dangerous phenomenon, which poses a worldwide threat. We stress the vital role played by the

International Tracing Instrument aimed at regulating the movement and acquisition of such weapons.

The Arab Group hopes that this year's session of the Commission will result in comprehensive, consensus-based documents reminiscent of the positive outcomes achieved in 1998 and 1999.

Mr. Nduhura (Uganda): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The African Group congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The African Group seizes this opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election and expresses appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Fodé Seck of Senegal, for his hard work as Chair of the 2015 substantive session. The Group appreciates the efforts made by the Chairs of the two Working Groups and looks forward to working with them during this session. The Group also expresses its appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo, for his thoughtful remarks.

I wish to inform the Commission that the African Group has nominated Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco as Vice-Chair, to represent the Group in the Bureau. The African Group will inform the Chair when the nomination of the Rapporteur has been completed.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia. The Group expresses its continued commitment to the principle and validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and underlines that disarmament and proliferation issues are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

As stressed by former Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, the long-term reason for the necessity of multilateral disarmament is the need for the United Nations to effectively play its primary role of ensuring peace, security and the survival of organized life on our planet, for there is a continued risk of the total destruction of life and human civilization as long as nuclear weapons exist.

In view of that, the African Group wishes to underscore the importance and relevance of the UNDC as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery.

In the past, the UNDC has measurably contributed to deliberations on nuclear disarmament as the highest global priority, as well as on issues related to nuclear non-proliferation, including the adoption of guidelines, recommendations and declarations. The Group regrets, however, that the UNDC has not been able to achieve a substantial outcome that would have led to the first concrete recommendations in more than a decade, owing to the lack of political will and to inflexible positions.

The African Group reiterates its call for concerted efforts to address the threat of nuclear weapons and their total elimination as the end goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Group reaffirms the need for the application of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability by nuclear-weapon States in relation to nuclear-disarmament measures. That principle remains essential to promoting the fulfilment of the obligations set out in article VI of the NPT, in consonance with the relevant multilateral legal obligations.

The Group again stresses the need to universalize the Treaty and to ensure compliance, in a balanced and comprehensive manner, with each of its three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It further stresses the inalienable right of States to development, research, production and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with article IV of the NPT.

This year marks the forty-sixth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT. In that regard, the African Group deplores the inability to achieve consensus on a final outcome document of its ninth Review Conference in 2015. That setback represents a missed opportunity for States parties to strengthen the Treaty by truly reinforcing its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Group believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and a legally binding assurance that they will never be produced again remain the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group further wishes to affirm that, pending the conclusion of such assurances, all non-nuclear-weapon States should be provided with legal assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

The African Group continues to stress that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes

an important milestone towards achieving nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. In that respect, one of Africa's major contributions was the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, on 15 July 2009.

The Group reiterates that the entry into force of the Treaty restates the continent of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Group further seizes this opportunity to encourage the States that have yet to ratify it, particularly the States contemplated in Protocol III, to take all necessary measures to ensure its speedy application. The Group believes that such action will significantly enhance the status of the Treaty and contribute to efforts to replicate this measure in the remaining parts of the world.

The Group unequivocally supports the call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It continues to express deep dissatisfaction at the failure to implement, as agreed, the commitments and obligations relative to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It expresses, in clear terms, its strong disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which should have been held in 2012, was not convened as mandated. In that regard, the commitments and obligations relative to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, as well as related measures of the 2010 Action Plan, remain valid until the establishment of such a zone.

The African Group wishes to highlight the goal of General Assembly resolution 70/34, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", as an integral part of the overall objective of a nuclear-free world and calls for its effective implementation. The Group reiterates the need for a high-level international conference to be convened no later than 2018. The Group believes that such a conference would serve as an opportunity for the General Assembly to make concrete recommendations, with a view to maintaining the momentum of the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly, as well

as intensify international efforts to ensure a nuclear-free world.

In view of the nineteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in September 2015, the African Group wishes to highlight the importance of achieving universal adherence to that instrument, bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that regard, and to encourage the remaining annex II States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay in order to ensure its entry into force.

Nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction yet to be prohibited. They remain a present and existential threat to humankind, and their use constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of human civilization and a crime against humanity. The Group considers any doctrine justifying their use or threat of use as unacceptable and unjustifiable. It further recalls the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that affirms that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law (see A/51/218, annex).

In that context, the Group reiterates its grave concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. It further reaffirms that any use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, and calls on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to consider such catastrophic consequences for humankind.

The African Group reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), not only as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues, but one that should work to break the impasse in nuclear-disarmament negotiations. The Group reiterates its call with respect to the urgent need for the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. In that regard, the Group welcomes the efforts made by the CD in 2014, as highlighted in its final report to the General Assembly (A/69/27). The Group calls on the CD to work towards the realization of the objectives for its establishment in its negotiations.

Regarding the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, the Group

wishes to underline that, in pursuit of the objective to contribute to international peace and security, such measures should be undertaken in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The African Group wishes to further stress that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in Africa. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a source of supply for terrorist groups, fuels organized crime and remains an ongoing and major concern to the States members of the Group.

Having entered into force as a legally binding instrument on the transfer of conventional arms among its States parties, the Arms Trade Treaty provides an opportunity to address some of the challenges of the unregulated transfer of conventional weapons. The Group recognizes and reaffirms the sovereign right of all States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms, their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Group reiterates the call for its implementation in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States, not just the major international producing and exporting States, and urges all major arms suppliers to accede to the Treaty without further delay.

The Group looks forward to actively participate in the upcoming Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as a follow-up to the Fifth Meeting, held in 2014, and the Meeting of Governmental Experts held in 2015. The African Group continues to emphasize the importance of the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. In that regard, the Group identifies the strengthening of the tools of international cooperation and assistance as essential ingredients that must be addressed in order to ensure the full implementation of the Programme.

The African Group continues to highlight the efforts made by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in the context of its contributions to disarmament issues and in providing the requisite assistance to the States members of the African Group in the implementation of efforts related to disarmament, peace and security issues. The Group wishes to stress the need to further strengthen all

United Nations regional centres for disarmament in order to fully discharge their mandates in that regard.

Finally, the Group once again regrets that the Disarmament Commission was not able to make concrete recommendations or reach a consensus during its three previous cycles. The African Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group appeals for a sustained, meaningful dialogue as we begin deliberations on major issues, and looks forward to concrete suggestions towards achieving peace and security for all.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission. I assure you and the Disarmament Commission's Bureau of our full support and cooperation.

The international security situation today is in a state of great flux, marked by multiplying conflicts and tensions among and within States. Even as old disputes remain unresolved and, at best, frozen, there are worrying indications of new cold wars in Europe and Asia and growing turmoil in the Middle East. Meanwhile, in my region, South Asia, real progress towards peace and prosperity is being impeded by hegemonic impulses that are often fanned and encouraged by powerful States from beyond the region to advance their own geopolitical objectives.

Those larger trends are impacting the disarmament regime and structures. The global consensus that the General Assembly developed 38 years ago to promote the disarmament agenda has eroded. There are continuing differences in approaches to pursue an agreed disarmament agenda. The challenges facing the disarmament machinery are not exclusive to the Commission or to the First Committee. Other parts of the arms-control machinery are also not immune to those problems. The failure of last year's Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the continuing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament on all its core issues are indicative of that gloomy picture.

There are new dangers on the global security horizon in areas such as the hostile use of outer space, offensive cybercapabilities, the development and use of lethal autonomous weapon systems and armed drones, as well as the development of advanced conventional hypersonic systems of global reach.

Efforts to regulate nuclear weapons through legal, normative and political means have not matched our expectations. Despite reductions in the number of nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War, the pace has been slow and the scale modest. Advancement towards multilateral nuclear disarmament is being resisted by a handful of nuclear-weapon States. Those States are willing to give up neither their large inventories of nuclear weapons nor their modernization programmes, yet they continue to advocate that for others. This doublespeak has only aggravated the sense of insecurity among other nations. Instead of fulfilling their legal disarmament obligations, those States have almost exclusively pursued non-proliferation with messianic zeal. That gap between legality and reality has eroded the global faith in the mutually reinforcing nature of those processes.

Close to 30 States parties to the NPT that are members of nuclear armed alliances continue to rely robustly on nuclear weapons, some of them even housing tactical nuclear weapons on their territories. As such, those States indirectly and implicitly encourage the possession or even use of nuclear weapons as part of the strategic doctrines of their alliances. Even as those States enjoy a nuclear umbrella, they call on others to eschew the means to defend themselves in the face of real and often growing security threats. Some of those States have also concluded discriminatory nuclear-cooperation agreements and helped grant waivers, in an unfortunate departure from long-held non-proliferation principles.

Double standards are also evident in the area of conventional arms. While professing strict adherence to responsible arms transfers, some of those States continue to supply an increasing number of conventional weapons in our region, thereby aggravating instability in South Asia. Those policies and actions are obviously driven by self-serving strategic, political and commercial considerations. It remains a grim irony that weapons, which and sustain conflicts, come from areas or regions that themselves enjoy peace. Only four countries account for two thirds of global arms exports, while major importers are developing countries, mainly in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Not surprisingly, these double standards have engendered a wide sense of dismay and disappointment in the international community, including in my own country. Many therefore see advocacy by those States for a world free

of nuclear weapons and for high standards in arms transfers as hollow rhetoric.

Progress towards nuclear disarmament is also being delayed and hindered by some who wish to divert the Conference on Disarmament's focus to partial non-proliferation measures, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). A treaty that is discriminatory in nature and does not address the existing stockpiles of fissile material would impinge on the security of some States while being cost-free for those with the largest amounts of fissile stocks.

Claims by some delegations that an FMCT would put a quantitative cap on nuclear weapons are false. The reasons are self-evident. It is because the vast stockpiles of fissile material, coupled with the continued unsafeguarded production for civilian and non-explosive military purposes, provide a ready reserve of fissile material that can be weaponized at will. There is no provision in the treaty favoured by those States that would constrain a quantitative or qualitative increase in nuclear weapons. Pakistan therefore cannot support an unequal treaty that has direct implications for our national security.

My country is a responsible nuclear State. Our nuclear policy is shaped by the evolving security dynamics in South Asia. Our nuclear capability is geared towards ensuring our security and self-defence, based on credible minimum deterrence. As my Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, told the General Assembly last year,

"Pakistan neither wants, nor is it engaged in, an arms race in South Asia. However, we cannot remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics and arms build-up in our region, which obliges us to take essential steps to maintain our security" (see A/70/PV.19, p. 41).

The Prime Minister further underscored that

"South Asia needs strategic stability, and this requires serious dialogue to achieve nuclear restraint, conventional balance and conflict resolution" (*ibid.*)

Pakistan has consistently supported the goals of nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-weapon-free world. Those objectives need to be pursued through the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear-weapons convention in the CD.

Pakistan shares the concerns and anxieties associated with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We have therefore participated in and contributed to that discourse during all three conferences on the subject. We also understand and share the sense of frustration among non-nuclear-weapon States over the slow pace of nuclear-disarmament obligations by nuclear-weapon States.

At the same time, my country believes that the subject of nuclear weapons, while relevant and important, cannot be exclusively reduced to a humanitarian paradigm. It is important to recognize the context and motivation of each State that possesses such weapons. In the case of Pakistan, our security was seriously challenged by the introduction of nuclear weapons into our region. We were left with no option but to acquire a credible nuclear-deterrent capability to respond to this and defend ourselves.

Several regions of the world have benefited from the application of principles, guidelines and confidence-building measures in the area of conventional arms. Such measures have proved their efficacy over the years at the regional and subregional levels. They are significant in that they can lead to the creation of favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and facilitate the resolution of a situation that might lead to international tensions and friction.

Confidence-building measures have a special significance in the South Asian context. Without progress towards eliminating underlying disputes and causes of mistrust between States, the utility of confidence-building measures, however, will diminish. They can act as neither a substitute nor a precondition for steps towards the politically negotiated settlement of disputes. Pakistan supports the development of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional arms. That has remained one of the traditional items on the Disarmament Commission's agenda. The Pakistan delegation has contributed constructively to deliberations on that in the last decade and will continue to do so.

The challenges presented to the global security architecture and the disarmament agenda and machinery require a cooperative approach aimed at rebuilding the consensus agreed by all States at the first United Nations special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. For over a decade,

Pakistan has elaborated elements to revive such an international consensus. Even as we recognize that such an undertaking would be neither quick nor easy, the Commission, as a deliberative body with universal membership, can play an important role in evolving such a consensus. An important beginning to revive such a consensus was made last week when the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament met to consider the objectives and agenda of such a session. An early convening of that session holds the promise of overcoming the present impasse in the field of disarmament, revitalizing the role of the United Nations to promote global security and to respond to the aspirations of a world without nuclear weapons, other non-conventional and advanced conventional weapons.

Mr. Elshandawily (Egypt): I am taking the floor a second time to deliver a statement in my national capacity. I shall try to be brief.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as to express our appreciation for your efforts in this important forum. Likewise, I would like to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election and to commend Kazakhstan and Morocco for chairing the two UNDC Working Groups. Let me assure the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to associate Egypt's position with the positions reflected in the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States.

This year is particularly important for the UNDC, as it comes after the unprecedented momentum and forthcoming results of the latest session of the First Committee, at the current seventieth session of the General Assembly. Therefore, a consensus on a substantive outcome is most important this year if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC to the multilateral machinery on disarmament, especially given the successive failures of past cycles of the Commission to adopt a draft report since 1999. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters to display and demonstrate the necessary political will in order to reach a substantive outcome on the two important issues on the UNDC agenda and

to enable the potential of the Commission to further the cause of disarmament.

Let me begin with Working Group 1, on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The starting point in that regard should be the implementation of resolution 69/58, on the follow-up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September 2013. The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. The UNDC should be ready to play its part in deliberating on the implementation of the road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction.

Egypt welcomes the continued momentum on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their use with international humanitarian law. We support the calls for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. In that regard, nuclear-weapon States bear a special responsibility for avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

The universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an indispensable step towards achieving general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet despite those repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of the zone, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, remains unfulfilled. The resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved and therefore should be implemented without any further delay. The UNDC's session provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to bring the process back on track. It provides an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate

and to restore the credibility and relevance of the NPT review process, if not the Treaty itself.

The deliberations of Working Group 2 of the UNDC on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons assume growing importance. By contributing to the debate on confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be helping to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the salient issue of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures: first, subjecting overproduction and the ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers to international inspection; secondly, mutual international accountability as the only guarantee against potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world; and, thirdly, addressing protracted threats to international peace and security. In that regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and security, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation, which employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic rights. By developing such confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be refining the traditional meaning of the term, thereby contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability.

Egypt stands ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations so as to ensure a balanced outcome between the results of the two Working Groups, an outcome that reflects a balance between the interests of all States. We are confident in your ability, Mr. Chair, to steer the discussion towards a successful outcome of the cycle.

Ms. Wood (Australia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the 2016 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). It is very positive for Australia to see our regional neighbour taking on this important role.

It is an honour to be given the opportunity to address the Commission on Australia's behalf.

The need for the UNDC to perform its core role as a deliberative body and a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly is more important now than ever,

given the need to develop the debates from the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the First Committee into a positive path forward for disarmament. We must also bear in mind the ongoing discussions this year in the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to consider the objectives and agenda for such a special session, in New York; the Open-ended Working Group's work to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, in Geneva; and the conclusions from the recent Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, D.C.

A lot has been said about the polarization on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues following the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the session of the First Committee. But we must remember that there remains one common objective. The international community shares the overarching goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. States may differ on the means and sequencing for achieving that goal, but, ultimately, the international community should focus not on differences but on common ground, by identifying concrete and practical building blocks to reach that shared goal.

With the addition of Norway today, Australia, along with 24 countries, is pleased to submit a progressive approach paper to the UNDC. The paper underlines the reality that there are no quick fixes, given that our goal is effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Only by addressing both the security and the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we take the incremental but necessary steps that will enhance security for all and provide the best chance of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Any process that can effectively lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons will, by necessity, be an inclusive one. Both Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon States have critical and cooperative roles to play in that regard. Moreover, in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, not only the five nuclear-weapon States under the NPT but all States that possess nuclear weapons will need to be involved.

The progressive approach paper acknowledges many of the central elements of the draft paper put

forward by Kazakhstan as the Chair of Working Group I. Those include the critical need to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; encouraging greater transparency from the nuclear-weapon States; reducing the risk of the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons; revitalizing the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament; strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones; underlining the necessity of further negotiations between the nuclear-weapon States, whether bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral, to reduce arsenals; and the important role of disarmament education.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signature. The Treaty has been a very successful instrument of international cooperation, effectively establishing a global norm against testing. However, voluntary moratoriums on nuclear-test explosions are no substitute for a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear testing and all other nuclear explosions. That can be achieved only through the entry into force of the Treaty.

With regard to conventional weapons, it is important to recognize key developments, including the convening last year of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Australia continues to work towards the universalization of the ATT. We welcome Greece, Lesotho and Peru as the newest member States. Australia will continue to work closely with States in our own region, the Indo-Pacific, to enable understanding of the ATT and encourage further signatories and ratifications.

The sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June, will be a useful opportunity for Member States to consider synergies among States on the Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty. Australia has been a solid supporter of practical measures to regulate the trade in conventional weapons, and we will continue to assist States to adhere to and implement well-targeted and workable measures.

We look forward to actively contributing to the discussions ahead.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your leadership and to express my full support. I also thank the members of

the Bureau and staff of the Secretariat for their most committed services the current and previous sessions. My delegation wishes to acknowledge its most grateful appreciation to the High Representative, His Excellency Mr. Kim Won-soo, and his very able team for their outstanding stewardship and for the great support given to Kazakhstan in its advocacy for disarmament.

There is no doubt that we must break the stalemate of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), dating back to 1999, and revitalize the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery. We should address the numerous new threats encountered today and also improve the working methods of the UNDC to consolidate past successes and respond to changing political situations and challenges. We note with deep regret that entities of the disarmament machinery have not executed their mandates for the past two decades. We hope that such a situation will soon change. Therefore, permit me to present various bold and innovative measures to achieve our desired objectives for a safe and secure world.

On nuclear issues, my delegation would like to elaborate the following. Kazakhstan has been fully committed to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security from the very first days of its independence. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons by State and non-State actors remains the main challenge that humankind faces today. We should therefore use every opportunity to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We recognize the key role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the main international structure responsible for the elaboration of goals and principles, and commend it for uniting international efforts in ensuring nuclear security.

However, the Nuclear Security Summits also contribute significantly and support the IAEA in accomplishing that common goal. Our President has participated in all four Summits, and we commend the Government of the United States and President Barack Obama for their initiative to launch the Summit process. We are confident that implementing the recommendations adopted at the consecutive Summits held in Washington, D.C., Seoul, The Hague and the again in Washington, D.C., last week will greatly increase nuclear security worldwide. We will spare no efforts to realize them.

One of the key aspects of our leadership at the fourth Summit was the position that, despite the

considerable progress made as outcomes of the Summits, the objectives set up in the framework of this initiative, generally speaking, are not fully implemented. It is therefore necessary to consider continuing the Summits to further reduce nuclear-security threats. Accordingly, at last week's Summit, Kazakhstan presented a fundamentally new document entitled "Manifesto: The World. The Twenty-First Century". It expresses a momentous stance on issues of war and peace, particularly, above all, the threat of a nuclear apocalypse in the event of the failure of the international community to promote and advance a total ban on nuclear weapons. I believe that the document will be made available to delegations through PaperSmart or other means of communication.

Speaking at the General Assembly at its seventieth session this past September, President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev urged the international community

"that a world without nuclear weapons should become the main goal of humankind for the twenty-first century." (*A/70/PV.13*, p. 47).

Kazakhstan therefore introduced resolution 70/57, entitled "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", which was adopted on 7 December 2015 and which the majority of States Members of the United Nations supported, to which we express our gratitude. It outlines the basic principles and objectives of nuclear disarmament and urges that bold steps be taken, including the adoption of a legally binding international instrument to prohibit and destroy all nuclear weapons. My country therefore calls for the establishment of a global anti-nuclear movement aimed at nuclear disarmament.

Given the need to take additional steps to discuss issues of nuclear disarmament, Kazakhstan has supported the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to advance the process of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and has participated in its meetings. We believe that entity is not an alternative to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) or the UNDC. However, the Working Group enjoys an absolute majority of supporters, and therefore its potential cannot be ignored. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to participate in that dialogue.

We will also work for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that would prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons irreversibly and verifiably and within a specific time

frame. We also support the initiative to conclude a treaty banning nuclear weapons. However, a simple ban is not enough for nuclear disarmament; an integrated approach is needed. We therefore support the initiative of building bridges among the different views on nuclear disarmament.

My country stands for an early start on the development of a treaty banning the production of fissile material in order to make the disarmament process irreversible and minimize the possibility of weapons-grade material falling into the hands of terrorists. That should not be a condition for the start of negotiations in the CD, and therefore we support the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts for the preparation of negotiations on the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, in which our expert participated. The recommendations of the Group serve as a sound tool for future substantive deliberations.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones cover the entire southern hemisphere. The 116 States members of such zones represent the majority of States Members of the United Nations. We support expanding such zones in the future, particularly by the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons. We support the proposal to hold annual meetings in New York of representatives of all the nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation is pleased to inform members that the Protocol to the Semipalatinsk Treaty, signed by the representatives of the five nuclear-weapon countries in 2014, has already been ratified by the United Kingdom, China, Russia and France. We look forward to the early completion of that work by the United States.

My Government condemns the nuclear tests and launching of ballistic missiles conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year. We therefore co-sponsored Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), adopted on 2 March. At the recent Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C., in their capacity as the current co-Presidents of the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan issued a joint statement condemning the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They also called for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and also for urgent measures to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

On 27 August 2015, the IAEA and Kazakhstan signed an agreement to set up the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan. The Bank, which is operated by Kazakhstan, will be a physical reserve of low enriched uranium available to eligible IAEA member States. The establishment of the Bank will contribute to guaranteeing non-discriminatory access to nuclear fuel and to strengthening the non-proliferation regime, thereby reducing nuclear risks.

Given the time constraints, let me reflect on a few more items on our agenda, including on non-nuclear issues where we also have several key considerations.

Earlier this year, we witnessed the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons exported from Syria in accordance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yet we are concerned that terrorists could possibly use chemical weapons or chemical products in Syria. In that regard, we see the relevance of the Russian initiative for concluding an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism.

The eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons this year will be an opportunity to take important decisions to further strengthen the Convention. In June, Astana will host a regional seminar for the Eastern European region on the preparations for the Review Conference. In addition, it is imperative that the fifth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held this year, come up with concrete solutions. Kazakhstan is a signatory to the CCW and its Protocols I, III and IV, and has decided to accede to Protocols II and V.

We participated in last year's experts meetings on lethal autonomous weapon systems, held under the auspices of the CCW, and we will also be engaged in experts meetings this April in Geneva. We believe that the banning of such systems is possible only under comprehensive and strict control.

Kazakhstan has decided to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty and is currently undertaking the relevant domestic procedures.

We fully support the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and

Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. We must truly put a halt to the illegal trading in such weapons, which kill 2,000 innocent civilians every day. We call on Member States to submit regular reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to support the International Tracing Instrument, so to strengthen those invaluable tools to monitor the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Peace is necessary for development, and vice versa, in a globalized and interconnected world in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Disarmament and non-proliferation must therefore move in parallel with other global processes, such as those involving poverty reduction, inclusive development, the rule of law, climate change and other issues. In that regard, one of the building blocks to a secure world is Kazakhstan's initiative whereby every country would transfer 1 per cent of its defence budget to the Sustainable Development Goals Fund. Hence, we are deeply concerned about the decision of a number of leading countries to spend massive funds to modernize their nuclear arsenals.

United Nations system-wide efforts and regional efforts on official development assistance, as well as international organizations and civil society, also contribute to the concept of One United Nations, combining development with arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives at the country, subregional and regional levels, thereby enhancing overall global security.

My country is committed to fully assisting in breaking the deadlock in the disarmament machinery to make it viable again for our collective peace and stability.

Mr. Varma (India): The Indian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2016 session and assures you of our full cooperation. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections. We convey our appreciation to the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan and Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco, for their diligent efforts last year and during the intersessional period. We would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his important statement today, especially his

emphasis on the need for the UNDC to move forward, particularly on making progress on a third agenda item.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Disarmament Commission — the only body with universal membership and the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by the final document of the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament (resolution S-10/2) — has had past successes in adopting guidelines and recommendations. While we share the widespread disappointment at the UNDC's inability to adopt consensus guidelines since 1999, in our view the current difficulties relate less to any inherent deficiencies in the machinery and more to the lack of political will on the part of Member States to invest in multilateral outcomes.

As a platform for dialogue and cooperation, the Commission can play an important role in reducing tensions and building confidence, provided that Member States start investing in this forum. That is not to deny that the Commission could do more to improve its functioning by undertaking focused and results-oriented discussions on the items on its agenda. We feel that a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is the appropriate forum to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the disarmament machinery.

Addressing the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., last week, Prime Minister Modi underlined that India remained committed to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. India supports the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which is part of our commitment to combat climate change. Nuclear security will be a continuing priority for India.

India attaches priority to global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. India believes there is a need to uphold genuine multilateralism to increase trust and confidence among all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, and to strengthen dialogue in order to close the gaps both on the constitution and expression of international will with regard to the pursuit of negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. As such, India has supported the proposal put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement for the Conference on Disarmament to commence

negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. We have also called for a reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment by all nuclear-weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and an agreement on a step-by-step process, underwritten by a universal commitment for the global elimination of nuclear weapons. India has also called for meaningful dialogue among all the nuclear-weapon States to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

India's draft resolutions in the First Committee — on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and on reducing nuclear dangers — have received support from a large of Member States. Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, on the basis of the agreed mandate. India also supported resolution 70/57, sponsored by Kazakhstan, entitled "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", the only nuclear-weapon State to do so.

On practical confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the field of conventional weapons, the other agenda item before the UNDC, in the past the Commission has in the past contributed valuable guidelines in that field. There is merit in building on the useful discussions last year with a view to bridging the remaining gaps. In our view, confidence-building must be a step-by-step process and should evolve at a pace comfortable for all participating States. CBMs should be adopted on the initiation and with the agreement of the States concerned. In elaborating practical CBMs in the area of conventional weapons, we could take advantage of the UNDC guidelines on CBMs, endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

We support the UNDC seeking inputs on specific topics of common interest to our agenda from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and in providing adequate resources for UNIDIR in preparing such studies.

On the issue of a possible third agenda item, to which the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs referred in his statement, at its sixty-ninth session the General Assembly mandated the Commission to keep in mind the proposal to include a third item on the 2015

agenda. While our priority remains the agenda item on nuclear disarmament, we will not stand in the way of reaching consensus on a third item, especially if it has the potential to expand the space for consensus-building and help the international community respond in a meaningful manner to the new and emerging challenges relevant to the disarmament agenda.

Since this is the second year of the current triennial cycle, our deliberations will be important in laying the foundation for adopting substantive recommendations at the conclusion of the cycle next year. We look forward to an in-depth exchange of views on all aspects related to the two agenda items. You, Sir, can rest assured of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2016 session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Libya associates itself with the statements made, respectively, by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Disarmament Commission is one of the oldest components of the United Nations disarmament machinery. It was established as a deliberative body to deal with multilateral disarmament issues. Over the years, the Commission has successfully drafted a number of guidelines and recommendations and reached consensus on a variety of vital issues. However, the Commission has been in a stalemate for over a decade, which might be the result of the prevailing lack of trust, flexibility and the necessary political will on the part of Member States. Libya looks forward to a change in the status quo so that we can achieve tangible successes during this session.

Despite the efforts made over the past decades in disarmament, the danger that nuclear weapons might be used still exists. Undoubtedly, nuclear disarmament remains a major priority and a multilateral political commitment. Banning nuclear weapons and their disposal by reaching a legally binding agreement to that end is the only and most assured safeguard against their use or threat of use. In that regard, Libya expresses its deep concern about the lack of progress in implementing the commitments on nuclear

disarmament and about the failure of the nuclear-weapon States to meet their obligations to fully eradicate arsenals, weapons or systems of delivery, according to their legal commitments, in line with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the obligations of nuclear disarmament provided for in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. We underline the need for those obligations and commitments to remain in force until they are fully implemented.

Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, is one of the priority themes that would greatly contribute to achieving full nuclear disarmament. A glimpse of hope surfaced through the success achieved in the 2010 NPT Review Conference, when a final document was adopted, particularly the part dedicated to supporting the implementation of the 1995 resolution on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. However, disappointments accumulated one after the other, starting with the failure to convene a conference on the issue in 2012, to the disappointment at the outcome of the NPT Review Conference last year. In that regard, we recall that the NPT is based on a deal between the nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. The latter pledged that they would not attempt to acquire nuclear weapons, while the former pledged to seriously try to eradicate and dispose of their nuclear arsenals. However, the shortfall in that equation, the ongoing stalemate and the failure to achieve any tangible progress on nuclear disarmament leads non-nuclear-weapon States to raise questions with regard to the seriousness and effectiveness of the NPT. That might drive them to reconsider new policies in finding alternatives that would achieve and safeguard security for all nations.

Libya expresses its deep concern owing to the catastrophic humanitarian impact resulting from the use of nuclear weapons. We stress the need for all countries to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. Libya underscores the need and importance of starting negotiations to reach a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that bans their acquisition, modernization, production, possession, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of their use. Such a convention should also provide for their destruction through a legally binding international agreement.

The measures aimed at building trust in the field of conventional weapons should not be an alternative to disarmament measures or a precondition thereto. They should be an element in establishing an environment conducive to enabling us to achieve progress on disarmament. Libya supports all practical measures for building trust with regard to conventional weapons, as they would promote transparency and provide the necessary environment to achieve development and progress on disarmament.

Libya also believes that confidence-building measures are a means to enhance international peace and stability. Such measures should be voluntary and based on consensus among all countries participating, in a manner that is sensitive to their gradual implementation and safeguarding the security of countries. In that context, Libya underscores the right of countries to the acquire, manufacture, export, import or maintain conventional weapons, their parts and components for self-defence and ensuring their security under the Charter of the United Nations. We call for the implementation of the relevant convention in a balanced and neutral manner, while safeguarding and protecting the interests of all countries — not only exporting and manufacturing countries.

Mr. Drobnyak (Croatia): First of all, allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship. You and all the members of the Bureau can be assured of my delegation's full support.

Croatia remains an active supporter of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). However, to say at the opening of the second substantive session of the current three-year UNDC cycle that we have high expectations from our meetings would be an overstatement. We hope that we will be proved wrong, but the fact of the matter is that the UNDC remains in a deadlock that appears increasingly difficult to break with every year that passes. That adds to the continuous decline in its relevance and the overall decrease in the trust that the Member States have in its capacity to address today's disarmament-related challenges in a significant manner.

However, we do not want to imply that the UNDC has lost its meaning and place in the overall United Nations system. On the contrary, with its universal membership and consensus-based decision-making, the UNDC remains a body with untapped potential. But the problem with which the UNDC is faced goes beyond

its operational scope. The United Nations disarmament machinery is plagued by an absence of progress and by divergent views on several important matters, with little or no prospect for middle ground for the foreseeable future. That is a problem that calls for in-depth reflection and, if need be, new creative thinking.

While chairing the Commission two years ago, and acting as a friend of the Chair the year after that, Croatia invested no small amount of time and diplomatic energy to find avenues that would enable a way forward. One cannot say that we were particularly successful. Nevertheless, we shall continue advocating the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/77 in the same diligent manner and with particular emphasis on more focused agenda items. Croatia continues to see the merit of pursuing a more creative approach to the agenda. We strongly believe that, through the inclusion of a third agenda item, deliberations would be uplifted and new, highly needed ground for potential success would be carved out.

It seems that a third agenda item — possibly on the matter of outer space — might be within our grasp, and we should spare no effort to seize it.

We also encourage the Commission to make meaningful use during its substantive sessions of the expertise of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

The United Nations disarmament machinery, including the UNDC, should serve as an important tool for advancement in resolving issues related to nuclear disarmament. It is no secret that the main reason for the unproductive status quo is precisely the nuclear portfolio. Regardless of the tremendous efforts invested, including during the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the final result fell short of the desired one.

We are of the opinion that a process that can effectively lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons can only be an inclusive one. It must leverage the existing global regime, in particular the NPT. The Treaty provides us with the necessary foundation, including its previous consensus-based documents such as the 2010 NPT Action Plan, and treaty-level commitments on the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons, including as outlined in article VI.

In our opinion, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime on nuclear weapons is an essential prerequisite for a future without nuclear weapons. Another example is securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which will reinforce the global norm against nuclear testing, but will also advance key disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

Due attention should also be given to the efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. New impetus and creative ideas are called for to bring all the relevant parties to the table, with full respect for their legitimate interests. That is essential not only for the long-term strategic stability of the Middle East and beyond, but also for unlocking parts of the blocked United Nations disarmament machinery, including the UNDC.

Croatia values the role and importance of practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. Such measures play an important role in promoting understanding, transparency and cooperation among States, and therefore in enhancing and maintaining regional and international peace, stability and security.

Traditionally, Croatia has been actively engaged in global humanitarian disarmament. We attach great importance to the conventions prohibiting anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Last year, Croatia hosted the first Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we view its successful outcome with great pride. We also introduced the draft resolution on the same topic, which the General Assembly successfully adopted as resolution 70/54. Furthermore, we wish to underline the significance of the first legally binding instrument on the arms trade, which addresses the illicit and non-regulated trade in arms, thereby making a great contribution to the worldwide prevention of armed conflict, violence and violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we should make every effort to fulfil the UNDC's mandate. In that regard, we are willing to work and do our best to reverse the current unfortunate trend and finally reach the consensus that will lead to the submission of relevant recommendations and guidelines to the General Assembly. The United

Nations Disarmament Commission's deliberations, guidelines and recommendations have the potential to result in concrete actions and to make a difference in the world by tackling extremely complex security challenges. By failing to reach consensus or to fulfil the Commission's mandate, we will be at a serious loss. There is too much at stake. After all, it is a matter of our collective security.

Mr. Illichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to congratulate the Chair on his election to this important post and to wish him every success in his important work.

The Russian Federation has been a strong advocate of a comprehensive multilateral approach to addressing disarmament issues, provided that the principles of strategic stability and equal and indivisible security for all are met. The United Nations is designed to play a central role in international efforts to ensure global stability and to counter new challenges and threats.

The United Nations disarmament machinery, set up almost 40 years ago, enjoys all the necessary authority and tools to address issues in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. That is particularly true for the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), which we consider to be a unique international forum that enables an open and equal dialogue among all States interested in adapting the fundamental disarmament principles to the current situation and elaborating recommendations with respect to new disarmament arrangements. It is important for every UNDC member State to be confident that its voice is being heard.

Unfortunately, the Commission has not avoided those problems that are characteristic of the United Nations disarmament triad, which are due mostly to objective contradictions in States' approaches. Any reference to allegedly outdated methods of work is nothing more than a mere pretext and a smokescreen for an unwillingness to seek acceptable compromises. The Commission has functioned successfully for several decades under the current rules of procedure. We are convinced that any departure from the consensus rule, which is crucial for the multilateral arms-control negotiations process, would be fraught with harmful consequences for international security.

We believe that the agenda adopted at the Commission's substantive session last year will be effective for the entire three-year cycle. However, we

do not think that we have exhausted all possibilities for approving the agenda based on compromises acceptable to everybody. If discussions about the inclusion of an additional third item continue, we are prepared to offer our suggestions.

The complexity of the problems that the international community is facing affects the state of play in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome the fact that the majority of States strive for compromise, which allows us to move to safely secure global and regional stability.

We are firmly committed to our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We regret the fact that, because of the position of three States — namely, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada — the 2015 NPT Review Conference did not succeed in adopting a final document. From our perspective, that turn of events seriously exacerbated the negative trends associated with the Treaty. A principal trend in that regard was the fostering of inflated expectations, and sometimes demands, in the field of nuclear disarmament that are beyond the means and resources available to nuclear-weapon States. The basics of the Treaty would be undermined and its credibility compromised if antagonism along these lines or on other issues continues.

Recently, we have been witnessing increasingly frequent calls for the prompt elaboration of a new international legal instrument that would regulate the practical aspects of reaching a global nuclear zero. Undoubtedly the issue is important, but the appropriate NPT provisions have not been taken into account. The Treaty's preamble and its article VI clearly state that the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals is to be carried out in accordance with a treaty on general and complete disarmament. Over recent decades, those provisions have inexplicably been ignored, despite the fact that they are legally binding for all NPT member States. Therefore, we regard redressing the historical truth on the issue to be an important dimension of our efforts in the framework of the new review cycle.

We would also like to draw the Commission's attention to the fact that, despite an unprecedented reduction in nuclear arsenals by Russia and the United States, other nuclear-weapon States for some reason remain on the sidelines. However, their aggregate nuclear capabilities are currently comparable to the

threshold that Russia is obliged to attain under the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. We believe that meeting those obligations would exhaust our ability to make bilateral reductions with the United States. Therefore, we need to seek possible ways of getting other States with nuclear military capabilities on board.

On a separate note, I would like to say a few words about the so-called humanitarian concepts in the field of nuclear disarmament. In our view, the main danger they bring is in sending the wrong message. For some reason, instead of strengthening international security and stability, they present humanitarian standards as a core task of nuclear disarmament. This interpretation takes the issue of nuclear disarmament out of its historical, strategic and legal contexts. It discredits the principle of deterrence and presents a time-tested and responsible policy of the nuclear-weapon States in the field of security as illegitimate and contrary to the common interests and aspirations of humankind.

Prioritizing humanitarian considerations is dangerous also because it diverts the attention of the international community from much more pressing issues in the field of international security and stability, such as the deployment of United States/NATO missile defence, the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the development of long-range, high-precision weapons, *inter alia*. In other words, we are putting on a back burner both those issues that are critically important for upholding strategic stability, and also those types of weapons that determine the capacity of States to unleash and wage wars.

Further discussions on the prospects for nuclear disarmament should strive to keep the NPT as one of the pillars of the international security system, and not undermine it. We support establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, which will undoubtedly bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. We regard establishing such zones as an important and efficient way of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Russian Federation stands ready to promptly sign a protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

Despite the fact that the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to adopt concrete decisions on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East,

the implementation of 1995 resolution on the Middle East remains on the international agenda. Russia is prepared to make every effort to ensure its implementation and to promote a regional dialogue on the issue.

We are responsible in implementing our obligations under article VI of the NPT. This has been proved by the considerable results we have already achieved. We stopped the nuclear arms race a long time ago. Moreover, for the third decade now, we have consistently carried out a phased reduction of our nuclear arsenals. Russia is ready to have a very serious discussion on nuclear disarmament.

By the same token, there must be no inflated expectations. Further steps in the field of nuclear disarmament are impossible unless serious and comprehensive preparatory work is done by all interested parties, first and foremost all those States that have a military nuclear capability. First of all, it is essential that any attempts to apply double standards in international affairs be avoided. The fundamental principle of strengthening strategic stability and equal and indivisible security for all States should serve as a basis for the development of international relations.

In the current international situation, unfortunately, we see the very opposite trend. Our Western partners continue to push the situation in the area of anti-ballistic missiles to the point of no return. The construction of the United States anti-missile base in Romania is almost completed. Four United States navy destroyers with anti-missile capability have been relocated to the Rota Naval Base in Spain. A new phase has begun with another United States anti-ballistic base to be built in Poland, with high-precision interceptor missiles to be added to its arsenal.

Notably, the achievement of agreements on the Iranian nuclear programme and, as a consequence, the elimination of the crucial argument that justifies the deployment of missile defence system in no way affected United States-NATO missile defence plans. From that we conclude that the real purpose of the United States global missile defence system is aimed, first and foremost, at the Russian nuclear forces.

The United States anti-ballistic defence missile system known as the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence, which is to be deployed on the territory of the Republic of Korea, is a new destabilizing factor in the Asia-Pacific region. The deployment of this system can only exacerbate the existing problems on the peninsula.

In Europe there are still United States nuclear weapons capable of reaching Russian territory. Moreover, such systems are currently being modernized. NATO has been carrying out joint planning for nuclear strikes, and training is being conducted in which they train the armed forces of non-nuclear States to prepare and use non-strategic nuclear weapons. We believe that that situation can have one solution, namely, the repatriation of all non-nuclear weapons to the national territory of the possessor, a ban on their placement abroad and the elimination of infrastructure that ensures their rapid deployment. The United States concept of a "global strike" and the unwillingness to refuse to deploy weapons in space bring with them an enormous potential for destruction.

Unfortunately, it is almost 20 years now since the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and it has yet to come into force. That is a serious reason to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the situation regarding the CTBT and to make additional efforts to ensure that positive shifts occur during its anniversary year.

With regard to conventional weapons, the conventional arms-control regime in Europe has already become outdated, whereas a new agreement to succeed it as a more up-to-date instrument has yet to materialize. The international community is well aware of our readiness to proceed to substantive discussions on a new regime for a treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe, as soon as NATO demonstrates a serious approach to the issue and comes up with relevant ideas and presents its proposals. The international community is well aware of our readiness to proceed to substantive discussions on a new regime for a treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe, as soon as NATO shows that it is willing to undertake a serious approach to the issue, comes up with and presents relevant ideas and proposals. But currently we are just seeing a progressive implementation of the decisions of the 2014 Wales NATO Summit, which are clearly anti-Russian, and, at the same time, they have frozen military cooperation in the Russia-NATO council.

However, we are prepared to discuss new constructive ideas on arms control with regard to conventional weapons within the UNDC and other such platforms.

In conclusion, we believe that even a cursory review of the urgent tasks on arms control, disarmament and

non-proliferation confirms the relevance of our dialogue in the Disarmament Commission, on the basis of the existing mandate and verified principles of consensus, thereby allowing for optimal and acceptable results for all. The effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission does not depend on some ephemeral transformations, but on specific practical contributions from each State.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at the current session. I am confident that, with your rich experience and wisdom, you will steer this session to positive outcomes. I would like to assure you, Sir, of our full cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Seck of Senegal, and the other two Vice-Chairs for the outstanding work during the previous session.

At present, human society has increasingly become a community of integrated interests and a shared future. Meanwhile, the world is still not tranquil, with lingering wars, turbulence and increasing non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, extremism, epidemics and cybersecurity issues. The maintenance of international security is an arduous task.

Under the new circumstances, all countries should follow the trend of the times, embrace peace and development, abandon the Cold War mentality and zero-sum-game theory, and instead foster a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, advance global security governance in a coordinated way and develop a new, win-win approach to security that is observed, shared and maintained by all.

China believes that nuclear disarmament should be promoted in a step-by-step manner, with universal security as the guiding principle and strategic stability as the basic guarantee, while making full use of existing mechanisms as an important platform. The principle of undiminished security for all must be upheld in transparency measures. At the same time, countries with the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and the main responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, and they should continue to drastically reduce their nuclear stockpiles through verifiable and irreversible means to create conditions for the ultimate achievement of complete nuclear disarmament.

We are opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form, and we support the efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. We are resolutely opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form and are working for a diplomatic resolution to regional hot-spot nuclear issues. China welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded by the P5+1 and Iran, which contributes to safeguarding the international non-proliferation regime, promotes peace and stability in the Middle East region and provides valuable experience to resolve major disputes through negotiations.

At present, the situation on the Korean peninsula is complex and sensitive. We hope that all parties concerned will stay on course towards dialogue and consultation in search of a solution, work together for the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks and pursue a dual-track parallel approach that includes denuclearization and replacing the 1953 Korean War Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement. China stands ready to work with the international community towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the building of a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula.

China actively participates in global nuclear governance by staunchly supporting the nuclear disarmament process, firmly upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and actively promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thereby making its important and unique contribution to the endeavour of promoting international peace and security. The fourth Nuclear Security Summit has just concluded. Chinese President Xi Jinping was invited to attend the Summit, where he delivered a keynote speech in which he comprehensively expounded on China's policies and proposals, introduced China's new measures and achievements in the field of nuclear security and put forward substantial initiatives to strengthen global nuclear security.

China has always supported practical and feasible confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms control and has made continuous efforts to promote related international and regional disarmament processes. China has been an active participant in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and in the reporting mechanism on transparency in military expenditures. A Group of Governmental Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms will meet later this year to review the Register's operations and development.

To improve the scope and universal application of the Register, my country considers it urgent to increase the number of participating countries.

We attach great importance to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. China has been earnestly implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, China has adopted a series of measures on legislation, law enforcement, capacity-building, international exchanges and cooperation, which have achieved remarkable results. China will actively participate in the upcoming sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, in which we hope to achieve positive results.

China supports the international community in taking the necessary measures to regulate the international conventional arms trade and in combating the illicit transfer and trafficking in conventional arms. China constructively participated in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiation process and is currently looking into the issue of acceding to the ATT. China is ready to strengthen cooperation with all parties with a view to building a regulated and reasonable arms trade order.

China attaches great importance to, and actively participates in, the ongoing discussions about lethal autonomous weapon systems. We are of the view that

the international community should intensively study and properly address the relevant concerns on the basis of comprehensive and inclusive discussions.

We are open to the addition of a third item on the agenda and are willing to participate and work together with all the parties concerned.

The issue of arms control and disarmament has a bearing on international security. All countries have the responsibility and obligation to make joint efforts to promote the process of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and to contribute to the maintenance of the universal security of humankind. As a unique deliberative body, the Disarmament Commission has played an important role in setting the priority agenda for multilateral disarmament negotiations. In recent years, the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission, has been confronted with difficulties. China hopes that all parties will work together to make positive progress the current review cycle.

In September 2015, President Xi Jinping announced that China would reduce its troops by 300,000, which is a demonstration of China's sincerity and its aspiration to join hands with the rest of the world to maintain peace and to pursue development and shared prosperity. China is willing to work with other countries in the effort to uphold world peace and stability and to advance the multilateral arms-control and disarmament process.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

356th meeting

Monday, 4 April 2016, 3 p.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi (Vanuatu)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

General debate (continued)

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): At the outset I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, as well as the Chairs of the two Working Groups, as you assume the stewardship of the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also avail myself of this opportunity to commend the tireless efforts of Ambassador Fodé Seck in his capacity as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2015 substantive session and the important work carried out by the two Chairs of the Working Groups, Kazakhstan and Morocco. I would like to thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355), which provided useful insights into the contemporary issues in disarmament. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

We are at a historic crossroads. As the second year of the 2015-2017 cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission commences today, disarmament has assumed an unprecedented degree of importance in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The 2030 Agenda seeks to build peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, targeting "significantly reduc[ing] all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere". Disarmament plays a pivotal role in achieving the objective of building peaceful and inclusive societies,

as envisaged in the global development agenda. It is our fervent hope that the much-needed resources to achieve sustainable development could be diverted from armaments globally to that end. In this context, Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We reaffirm the centrality of the Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament apparatus that considers specific disarmament issues and submits concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. It is imperative that the Commission achieve concrete results in the current UNDC cycle, a task which the Commission has not been able to achieve for the past 15 years or so. This would require a demonstration of the requisite political will and flexibility on the part of Member States.

The need to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction is now more urgent than ever. Sri Lanka's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by nuclear weapons is reflected in international treaty obligations we have undertaken in the field of disarmament. It is our belief that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, all States have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

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Strengthening the disarmament treaty regime is essential to ensuring rule-based regime for nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we wish to recall and reiterate our support for the key recommendations made by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission in 2006, specifically the paramount value of multilateralism and the overall importance of treaties and international law in reaching the goal of disarmament. In this regard, we wish to reiterate the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the 2010 NPT Action Plan and the 13 practical steps to disarmament agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the importance of adherence to all other principal legal instruments in this field.

As the international community continues to be confronted by the spectre of terrorism, with the increasing threat of the destabilization of established States, the danger of nuclear material falling into terrorist hands and its unthinkable consequences demand our urgent attention. The starting point for international efforts to confront this danger would be the widest possible adherence to, *inter alia*, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the strengthening of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material by the early entry into force of the 2005 amendment to the Convention.

Sri Lanka has long held the view that outer space is a part of the common heritage of humankind and that all people should have an equal opportunity to explore and utilize it for peaceful purposes and for the common benefit of all through cooperation. We consider that, while space exploration and the utilization of outer space and its environment offer ample opportunities to humankind, they also bestow on the space actors the responsibility to keep the space environment free from conflict and prevent it from becoming an arena for the arms race.

We recognize that the existing legal framework on outer space, as represented by the Outer Space Treaty, needs to be strengthened, since the political climate concerning outer-space sustainability and security has changed drastically. The militarization and potential weaponization of the space environment have underlined the danger of outer space becoming a contested area and a source of future conflict. We believe that the conclusion of an international agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer

space would contribute to averting a catastrophic effect on humankind.

As we work towards our shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, we would also like to highlight the importance of disarmament education and research. In this regard, we wish to commend the work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). It is vital that the work of UNIDIR be supported by as broad a representation of Member States as possible in order for the Institute to effectively carry out its unique mandate.

Regional disarmament mechanisms play a significant role in complementing and promoting the global agenda for peace and disarmament. In this regard, we wish to express our satisfaction that the activities carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and to acknowledge its role in promoting United Nations activities at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security. We are grateful to the Government of Nepal for its support for the Centre to operate from Kathmandu. We believe that it is imperative for the Regional Centre, in keeping with resolution 70/65, to move its operations back to Kathmandu from Bangkok, where the Centre was temporarily relocated following last year's earthquake, as soon as possible.

Sri Lanka remains committed to striving with all States and other stakeholders to make nuclear disarmament realizable and bring peaceful uses of nuclear technology within reach. My delegation looks forward to constructive deliberations at this substantive session.

Mr. Moussa (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chair, allow me on behalf of the Ivorian delegation to extend to you my warmest and most sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election as Chair of our Commission. I remain convinced that your experience and leadership will be a valuable contribution that will allow our Commission to see progress on the two items inscribed on the agenda for this session. I would also like to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Fodé Seck, and to his team, whose spirit of openness and reconciliation has allowed our work to proceed smoothly in the last session. I would also like to support the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia and Uganda, respectively, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

As in previous years, here we are once again, meeting at this annual substantive session to try to make progress on the question of disarmament. In the past few years, this discussion, we should point out, has been characterized by a lack of progress. The stagnation that has affected the work of our Commission affects its relevance and its credibility, making it incapable of providing recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with the mandate that was entrusted to it since the first United Nations special session on disarmament.

While we can derive satisfaction from the drastic reduction in nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction since the end of the Second World War, the threat of nuclear weapons to our planet remains undeniable. That is why nuclear disarmament in all its forms must be a priority.

The impasse that we have seen in the work of the Disarmament Commission and even in the Conference on Disarmament has had repercussions on all of the forums in which the nuclear issue is discussed. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, for example, though open for signature since 1996 and ratified thus far by 164 States, has still not entered into force. In this respect, we call upon annex 2 States, whose ratification of the Treaty is indispensable, to show flexibility and to step up their signature and ratification process.

My delegation believes that the swift conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, specifically regarding enriched uranium and plutonium, should contribute significantly to progress in the debate on disarmament. Likewise, the adoption of a general convention on nuclear disarmament would be an unprecedented success for our planet.

The year 2015 has given rise to the hope that any negotiation, no matter how complex, could, with the political will of States, lead to concrete results. The agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue shows that certain avenues exist and that, with trust on all sides, the world can make great progress.

Aware of the humanitarian repercussions that could arise from the use of nuclear weapons, my country hopes that the example of Africa, which was declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as was Latin America, will be followed by other continents and regions. Accordingly, my Government encourages the States of the Middle East region to step up their efforts to conclude an agreement. It is clear that the objective of

nuclear disarmament does not supersede the legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive firm and legally binding security assurances, as well as the legitimate right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in particular in the areas of agriculture and health.

Experts note that small arms and light weapons claim more than 700,000 lives every year. This figure clearly reveals the scope of the harm caused by this type of weapon to humankind. That is why my delegation is closely following the adoption of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. Indeed, my country, which has experienced a crisis for over a decade, is in a position to understand the harmful consequences of the circulation of and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The experience of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Côte d'Ivoire has taught us that with political will and with the assistance of international partners, it is possible to effectively combat this phenomenon.

At the regional level, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted in 2006, was the result of an exemplary collective political process, allowing States in the region to cooperate effectively against the illicit trade in these weapons. My country would like to take this opportunity to thank Japan and the United Nations Development Programme for their support for the national marking and tracing process. My delegation would like to recall that the new technologies used in the manufacturing of light weapons must ensure that marking and tracing remain, as we have said on several opportunities in our discussions.

With respect to the Commission, my delegation shares the interest expressed by my predecessors in revitalizing our work. From our point of view, it is not so much a question of procedure as of serious differences on topics of common interest. Flexibility in defending our interests must be the attitude that we should adopt, with a view to achieving effective compromises, especially when it comes to new challenges, such as the introduction of weapons in outer space as well as new cybernetic and information technology capabilities. Despite the real obstacles our negotiations face, we must be optimistic about the future. Only by doing so will we be able to ensure that multilateralism will prevail.

In addition, the adoption, after more than 20 years of negotiations, of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue that I mentioned earlier, are very meaningful examples of how questions linked to disarmament can be resolved through political and peaceful means. It is therefore not too late to overcome our differences and restore trust among us, so that we can reach satisfactory solutions that are accepted and shared by all.

Mr. Napolitano Martinez (France) (*spoke in French*): Sir, I wish to convey to you my congratulations on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this second session of its current cycle. I hope it will create a positive, constructive and pragmatic impetus. I want to address a few points with regard to France's position.

The past years since the last session of the Disarmament Commission has been marked by undeniable successes but also by unacceptable developments in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. Let us begin with the successes.

First of all, the Vienna agreement reached in July 2015 between the E3+3 and Iran finally paved the way to a sustainable solution to the Iranian proliferation crisis. The agreement, endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), limits the Iranian nuclear programme for the long term, closes off all pathways to access to an atomic weapon and establishes a robust verification system. It can be a success for diplomacy only if it is respected by all parties. France will see to that.

Next, we should mention the success of the fourth Nuclear Security Summit only a few days ago, where over 50 Heads of State reiterated their commitment to strengthening the security of civilian facilities for storing and transporting fissile materials in order to avoid terrorist risks. Moreover, the tools of conventional disarmament grow stronger each day. The Arms Trade Treaty today has 130 signatories, and over 80 States are already parties to it. We must maintain and bolster our efforts with a view to universalizing the Treaty and ensuring that the rules it contains become the general rule for all.

Throughout various meetings, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has, for its part, reinforced the certainty and common understanding regarding the threat posed

by the illicit trafficking of these deadly weapons. We trust that, in the lead-up to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties in June of this year, the international community will rise to the challenges posed by this threat.

Finally, with regard to outer space, the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities and the constructive discussions that took place last year on a code of conduct for outer space activities underscore the fact that the subject, as mentioned earlier, is now ripe for an expanded discussion. My delegation, in that respect, is open to the inclusion of an item on this subject in our work this year.

This past year, there have also been missed opportunities, most notably, at the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was unable to reach a consensus document. The absence of the agreement should not make us forget the Treaty's centrality to the non-proliferation system, to our collective security and to the security that it has brought us since its entry into force in 1970 and subsequently, since its extension in 1995. We also regret that the many initiatives proposed by a number of States within the Conference on Disarmament were unable to unblock talks in that crucial forum to move forward disarmament negotiations.

Finally, there have been unacceptable developments this year. Since the start of 2016, North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January; in February, it carried out a launch using ballistic missile technology, under the guise of a space launch, in violation of several Security Council resolutions, thereby threatening the stability in the region. Moreover, it has conducted ballistic missile launches since then, further heightening tensions in an already unstable region. The Security Council, through its adoption of resolution 2270 (2016) and its unprecedented strengthening of sanctions, has thus sent a clear message to Pyongyang that the international community will no longer tolerate such wilfulness.

Moreover, the use of chemical weapons in Syria remains a source of grave concern for my country. Their use has continued despite Security Council resolutions, and these taboo weapons have become common currency in the conflict. Major doubts hanging over the sincerity of the Syrian authorities in their declarations

to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons also pose the risk of the proliferation of those weapons. Those responsible for their use must be brought to account. To that end, we in the Security Council have created a joint investigative mechanism, a neutral organ independent of the United Nations tasked with identifying perpetrators. We eagerly await its results. The use of missiles against civilians during the conflict has only heightened our already grave concern. Unfortunately, all the foregoing elements are only a few examples of the uncertainty that defines our strategic and security context today and that cannot be ignored when discussing genuine disarmament.

In the nuclear sphere, which I would now like to discuss briefly, the NPT is, as I have already stated, the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the bedrock of our disarmament efforts. As already mentioned by a number of speakers, the nuclear-weapon States as defined by the NPT must honour their obligations under the Treaty. France is aware of its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State. When it comes to nuclear disarmament, France's record is exemplary. The irreversible dismantling of our nuclear testing site and the equally irreversible dismantling of our fissile-material-production facilities for weapon-production purposes, the dismantling of the land component of our deterrent and the reduction of one third of our maritime and airborne components are examples that reflect how seriously France takes its commitments. Our balance sheet is one of action, not just words.

We must also strengthen the other aspects of the multilateral framework and induce all States that have not yet done so, including those of annex 2, to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We hope that the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty this year will help us reactivate the impetus with a view to its entry into force. We must also negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. France has submitted a proposal, and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on this subject, which was adopted by consensus, is an important part of building trust in this area in order to finally achieve a treaty. These two subjects are the two priorities of my delegation when it comes to nuclear issues and the next stages in which we need to make progress.

Lastly, I would like to mention in this regard the polarization of positions and statements on nuclear

issues, which has unfortunately prevented us from breaking the deadlock. This polarization is not only sterile, but I fear that it also plays into the hands of those who are happy with the status quo. On the contrary, my delegation would prefer to have a peaceful, constructive and realistic debate. That is the only thing that can help us move forward towards genuine disarmament in the real world.

Let me conclude by reiterating my delegation's support and the assurance that France will participate constructively, pragmatically and realistically in the Commission's work in the hopes of being successful.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Government of Vanuatu, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2016 session. We look forward to working with you, Sir, as you ably discharge your important duties. We also congratulate the other members of the Commission's Bureau for their elections to date. And let us express our appreciation to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his compelling presentation this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

In April 2009, President Obama laid out his vision for a world without nuclear weapons and his agenda for reducing nuclear dangers. The President made clear that while global nuclear disarmament was a long-term, generational project, there are steps that we can take today to create the conditions for achieving this shared objective of the international community.

In support of this agenda, just last week, President Obama hosted the fourth Nuclear Security Summit, in Washington, D.C. These Summits have contributed measurably to international security, spurring concrete actions to decrease highly enriched uranium and plutonium stocks, improve security measures for safeguarding nuclear facilities and transporting nuclear materials, and strengthening capacity to counter nuclear smuggling. Through the Summit process, the international community has also strengthened the international organizations, institutions and multilateral legal instruments that make up the global nuclear-security architecture and improved coordination among them. In the post-2016 approach to nuclear security, we will look to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations, INTERPOL, the

Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism to contribute to the sustainability of the Summit process, through the implementation of the individual institutional action plans that the leaders adopted on 1 April.

Also of note, on 16 January the IAEA verified that Iran completed the nuclear-related steps it committed to under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The nuclear deal will ensure Iran's nuclear programme is and remains exclusively peaceful by cutting off all of Iran's pathways to enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon and by putting in place the inspections and transparency necessary to verify that Iran is complying with the deal.

For its part, the United States is committed to our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments, including with regard to article VI. Despite the lack of a final document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, statements at the Conference demonstrated overwhelming and deep-seated international support for the Treaty and for its enduring contribution to international peace and security. The 2020 Review Conference will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, and it will be important, substantively and symbolically. We look forward to working with all States parties as preparations for the 2020 Review Conference get under way.

Our bilateral nuclear-reduction efforts with the Russian Federation are an essential part of our comprehensive, full-spectrum approach to nuclear disarmament. The United States stockpile today is 85 per cent lower than it was during the Cold War high. Three years ago, in June 2013, in Berlin, President Obama stated the willingness of the United States to negotiate with Russia a reduction of up to one third of our deployed strategic weapons from the level established in the New START Treaty. That offer is still on the table. Progress requires a willing partner and a conducive strategic environment.

In the multilateral realm, most recently at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we have proposed a creative compromise to begin long-delayed negotiations on a global treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In any such CD negotiations, all issues would be on the table for discussion and all national equities would be protected by the principle

of consensus. An in-force fissile-material treaty and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would impose quantitative and qualitative caps on nuclear-weapon stockpiles, which in turn would help to set the foundation for the world without nuclear weapons that all of us seek to establish. In making our latest fissile-material proposal in the CD, we earnestly tried to take the stated concerns of all CD member States into account. Our proposal has received strong support from many CD member States and also remains on the table.

In pursuing nuclear disarmament, the United States embraces a realistic and practical approach. We can never separate disarmament from the global security environment or strategic stability considerations or divorce it from our security commitments to friends and allies. Progress on nuclear disarmament will not be made by ignoring the security imperative of retaining a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent for as long as nuclear weapons exist.

In seeking to build support for realistic and practical measures for nuclear disarmament, it is clear that more genuine dialogue between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is needed. That is one reason why in Prague, in December 2014, Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller announced a new initiative by the United States to form an International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. The Partnership is composed of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, and is being implemented in collaboration with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI).

The Partnership builds on prior efforts, such as the United Kingdom-Norway Initiative, which began in 2007, by seeking practical solutions to both future arms control and disarmament technical challenges. We thank both nations for their pioneering efforts in this exciting work. The Partnership aims to build capacity in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification, for without such capacity, global nuclear disarmament will never be achieved. The Partnership is also furthering understanding of the complexities inherent in nuclear disarmament verification and monitoring. For example, under the New START Treaty, inspection activities are focused on delivery vehicles. But in a future agreement, we are likely to be focused on individual warheads, which is a new and difficult challenge. The Partnership offers international leadership by

facilitating technical progress to address the challenges of nuclear-disarmament verification.

In March 2015, the partners agreed to establish three working groups: one on monitoring and verification objectives, one on on-site inspections and one examining technical challenges and solutions. The Partnership's three working groups met for the first time in Geneva in February to continue their work. In Geneva, more than 80 experts from 20 countries participated in the working groups' discussions. The working groups developed a simple scenario involving the dismantlement of a notional nuclear weapon, the related inspection of that dismantlement by a team of experts representing the interests of all participating States, and the related technologies that could support such an inspection. This scenario allows the three working groups to coordinate and focus their efforts and develop common understandings of the challenges and potential solutions associated with nuclear-disarmament verification. The working groups' terms of reference, which provide the framework for these groups to continue to pursue their technical discussions and work, are posted in their entirety on the State Department's and NTI's websites. Partner countries will receive an update from each working group at the start of the next plenary, and we are grateful to Japan for agreeing to host that meeting in June.

Last year, the Commission embarked on its 2015-2017 agenda by focusing on two long-standing topics: in Working Group I, chaired by Kazakhstan, recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and in Working Group II, chaired by Morocco, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We thank both Working Group Chairs for their leadership to date and look forward to working with them again this year.

As we all know, these particular topics have been on the Commission's agenda for a number of years, and, regrettably, success in forging consensus recommendations on either subject has continued to elude us. Last year, both Working Group Chairs drafted serious, though non-consensus, texts for our ongoing consideration. From the United States perspective, while none of these documents in their current state are perfect and each needs more work, we feel that each represents a reasonable basis for further deliberations.

As we have noted in this Commission since April 2014, the United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. In this regard, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor, with Russia and China, resolutions 68/50, 69/38 and 70/53. All three resolutions refer the recommendations contained in the 2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) to the UNDC for consideration, and all three resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly without a vote. As the Commission progresses, we feel that it should establish a working group to address the preparation of recommendations to promote the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

In the end, our ability to make headway in this body will depend on how prepared delegations are to exhibit flexibility and practice compromise. Given past disappointments here, we are under no illusions about the challenges before us. We simply need to keep trying and to try harder. This Commission is an important element of the United Nations existing multilateral disarmament machinery and is worthy of such efforts. The United States pledges to do all that it can to find a viable way forward for the work of this Commission.

Mr. Sandoval Cojúlun (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to steer the work of the Disarmament Commission.

We align ourselves with the statement to be made by the delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355). However, in our national capacity, we would like to make some specific comments related to the work of the Commission.

As the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission offers us the opportunity to discuss specific disarmament issues with a view to making concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. However, for over 15 years the latter has failed to fulfil its mandate, and consensus continues to elude us. We hope that this cycle will provide new

momentum to this important body and allow us to emerge from the political impasse, which has made it impossible to adopt recommendations.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, in recent years we have seen notable optimism and renewed interest on the part of many States to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons, despite the failure of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the paralysis of the disarmament machinery. We are encouraged by the dynamism of the international community in advancing a position that makes it clear that we will not wait for a small group of nuclear-weapon States to determine when and if we will achieve nuclear disarmament.

We welcome the inclusion of the initiative of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the debate at the United Nations, through several resolutions adopted during the last substantive session of the First Committee. In that regard, the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which were held in Oslo, Nayarit and most recently in Vienna, have been instrumental in launching this debate and anchoring it within the multilateral disarmament agenda, and we are proud of the endorsement of the Humanitarian Pledge by CELAC member States, which was announced at the end of the last Conference. This shows that our region remains at the forefront of the fight against nuclear weapons.

Our region was also the first densely populated area to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Non-nuclear-weapon States must remain steadfast and recall that nuclear disarmament is everyone's responsibility, not just that of a small number of nuclear-weapon States. We must show that we will not waver in our firm commitment to complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament and that we are committed to filling the legal gap that currently exists in the prohibition of nuclear weapons, as we have done with all other weapons of mass destruction.

We welcome the first session of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, established by resolution 70/33, which was recently held in Geneva. The working group seeks to find concrete solutions to help us overcome the current impasse. It also shows that, far from being discouraged, we consider the failure of the last NPT Review Conference to be serving as a

collective impetus for an increasingly vocal majority and one which is increasingly less willing to be content to repeat the same commitments in the hope that this time we will see progress.

We do not see it as a parallel measure or an attempt to undermine the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as some have alleged. It is worth recalling that the objective of the NPT — the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime — is the total elimination of nuclear weapons and not to safeguard the consensus or to preserve the status quo indefinitely.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and is an essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We must accord equal attention to the three pillars of the Treaty: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We must also pay attention to the fact that they are all closely related and mutually reinforcing. As a State party to the NPT, we are committed to promoting its universality and full compliance with all of its provisions. It is clear that non-nuclear-weapon States have fulfilled their part of the commitment. Now it is up to nuclear-weapon States to do the same.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential component of nuclear disarmament. Guatemala is proud to be part of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first inhabited zone free of nuclear weapons and served as an example and inspiration for creating other nuclear-free regions. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the convening of the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which took place in New York on 24 April 2015. Given the unacceptable risk that the very existence of these weapons poses to humanity, we consider it essential to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force.

On the subject of practical measures for confidence-building in the field of conventional weapons, we believe that they are an indispensable tool for relieving and dispelling tensions and for preventing the escalation of conflicts or crises between countries. Given the current situation, transparency and confidence-building have proven to be valuable tools in multilateralism, and it is essential to move

forward in our work to find how to further improve these measures.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the first legally binding instrument that seeks to significantly reduce the human cost of arms proliferation worldwide, preventing arms suppliers from taking advantage of the weakest point in the legal supply chain of weapons and keeping such weapons from being diverted into the illicit market. It sets out the responsibilities of each actor in the chain. Guatemala signed the Treaty shortly after it was opened for signature, and our Congress ratified it on 26 January. We hope to deposit the instrument of ratification soon.

We are proud of our recognized leadership on this issue in our region. We have supported the Treaty from the start and worked hard for its adoption. We congratulate Mexico on having hosted the first Conference of States Parties and for all its work as the Provisional Secretariat of the Treaty. At the Conference, important decisions that will affect the implementation of the Treaty in the years to come were adopted, and while we are disappointed by some of them, we are encouraged by the fact that together, we have given the Treaty solid foundations, such as the rules of procedure and of financing. Although we are aware that it is not a perfect treaty, it has the potential to make a real difference in terms of ensuring that exporting and importing countries, as well as transit countries, operate under the same norms. It could also be an important tool in the fight to eradicate illicit arms markets.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its monitoring mechanisms. We note with concern the lack of progress that has been made despite the fact that we adopted final documents both during the Review Conference and during the fifth Biennial Meeting of States. In addition, we are concerned at the trend whereby success is measured by achieving a consensus, in that, when consensus is achieved rather than making real progress, enabling this important instrument to develop and ensuring its continued relevance, "consensus" has become a de facto veto used by some to prevent the Programme of Action from evolving and adapting to new realities and challenges, such as synergies and complementarities

between the Programme of Action and ATT, or the issue of ammunition.

We welcome the particular attention to the illicit flow of ammunition in the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons and fully agree with the recommendation to consider new approaches to curbing these trends. They could have an immediate effect on the intensity of armed violence, and the report recognizes, in fact, that the real value of small arms depends on "the uninterrupted supply of ammunition" (S/2015/289, para. 11). We hope that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in New York in a few months, will make progress on these issues.

Guatemala strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and under all circumstances, which is a violation of the principles enshrined in international humanitarian law. Guatemala reaffirms its commitment to contributing to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and notes with satisfaction the holding of the First Review Conference of the Convention in Dubrovnik.

Finally, we hope that this three-year cycle of deliberations will address substantively the two items on its agenda as two mutually reinforcing objectives.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. You have the full support of my delegation as you exercise your functions as Chair.

Mexico remains committed to nuclear disarmament, a subject of the first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I), 70 years ago, which remains the unfinished business of the Organization. The General Assembly at its seventieth session adopted four resolutions co-authored by Mexico that have changed the dynamics of and approach to addressing nuclear weapons. Two of them — resolutions 70/47 and 70/48 — underline the need to prohibit and eliminate these weapons due to humanitarian consequences that could stem from accidental or intentional detonation. The third, resolution 70/50, through which the General Assembly stigmatizes nuclear weapons, declares them inherently immoral, and the fourth, resolution 70/33, which established an open-ended working group whose first meeting was successfully held in Geneva as a forum for substantively addressing effective legal measures for achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

The majority and strong support these resolutions received cannot go unnoticed by the United Nations and, in particular, by the Disarmament Commission. This support demonstrates the urgency with which the international community demands concrete progress in nuclear disarmament and expresses the frustration of much of the membership with regard to the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been unable to fulfil its mandate for two decades, thereby preventing regulatory development of international law. The Disarmament Commission finds itself in the same moribund situation today, after 17 years of not producing substantive recommendations, having become a forum for reiterating positions with a view to preserving consensus.

The great failure of the ninth Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons nevertheless had a single positive element — it showed the existing unity among nearly the entire membership for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons so that they will never again be used under any circumstances.

In the field of conventional weapons, the picture is a little more encouraging. The Arms Trade Treaty represents a historic milestone in strengthening the international legal structure of control of transfers of conventional arms. Mexico wishes to again express its gratitude for the trust and commitment of all stakeholders, which enabled the success of the Conference of States Parties to the ATT held in my country, which provided an opportunity for fundamental decisions on building institutional and procedural aspects of the Treaty regime to be adopted. Mexico will continue working for the universality and effective implementation of the Treaty at the national and regional levels.

Mexico welcomes the successful holding last year of the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dubrovnik. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted without a vote on that occasion, provide the ideal platform for activities to be carried out during the next review cycle of the Convention, with a view to achieving the Convention's universality and full implementation. Mexico has argued that multilateral forums should promote — and not hamper — the deliberations and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission at this session will enable it to fulfil its mandate.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): I am delivering this statement on behalf of my Ambassador and Permanent Representative.

Mr. Chair, my delegation joins others in congratulating you on your election to lead the 2016 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We appreciate your personal efforts, Sir, and those of the Chairs of the two working groups in preparing for this session. We hope that the first session of the current triennial cycle augurs well for its desired outcome and helps to break the spell that has made tangible results of the Commission's work rather elusive over the past many years.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We share the observations of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs that, while there has been an array of developments in recent times on the issue of conventional weapons, the nuclear disarmament agenda has been characterized by a growing polarization of positions leading to protracted deadlocks and resulting frustrations. There is, however, a broad-based understanding that the status quo of nuclear disarmament front is far from desirable, leading to the creation of complementary or alternative platforms, even when they fall short of garnering political support across the board. While the reality and efficacy of such platforms cannot be denied altogether, we agree with others that the Disarmament Commission remains the sole deliberative body with universal membership for building and fostering consensus on critical issues in the areas of general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

The forward-looking pronouncements made at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2013 make us believe that there is sufficient political will to take forward the nuclear disarmament agenda in parallel with the pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But what is perhaps missing is the leadership and courage to translate political will into demonstrable results in action. It remains to be seen whether the increasingly volatile security situation around the globe can prove to be enough motivation for reinvigorating the disarmament machinery as a whole, including the Disarmament Commission.

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation need to be pursued with matching priority if we are to have a world free of nuclear weapons. Their sustenance and the proliferation of nuclear arsenals continue to pose grave threats to all of humankind and undercut the universal, comprehensive and ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted last year (resolution 70/1). The line drawn between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation may serve the purpose of *realpolitik* that would continue to drive a wedge in our collective efforts to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons in a complete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

The absence of a mutually reinforcing agenda on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation would also continue to retard the overarching pursuit of general and complete disarmament. Bangladesh therefore sees merit in the work on developing appropriate legal measures provisions and norms through inclusive and participatory multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. In a similar vein, we reaffirm our support for initiating negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as envisaged by the General Assembly.

Bangladesh also recognizes the humanitarian and ethical dimensions being brought to bear upon the question of nuclear weapons. The growing awareness of the international community of the humanitarian consequences of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should duly inform the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission. Outside the Commission, Bangladesh would encourage further reflection on the possible implications of the use or threat of use of nuclear arsenals on the sanctity and inviolability of the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States deserve legally binding assurances from nuclear-weapon States on refraining from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. This remains a priority consideration for Bangladesh in the context of the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the overall multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations.

We acknowledge the crucial role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the negative-security-assurance agenda as well as the twin objectives of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is

a matter of regret that the bold vision set out in this regard in the programme of action adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has largely been relegated to an outdated agenda, especially in certain parts of the world. It is also perhaps a missed opportunity for the world that the political commitments articulated with regard to advancing the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty have failed to gain much transaction in real terms.

Bangladesh strongly believes in compliance with the essential safety, safeguard and security measures designed to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including for accelerated development in developing and least developed countries. In our national capacity, we shall continue to further deepen our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other relevant international partners in building our capacity for such compliance.

With regard to conventional weapons, Bangladesh closely follows and participates in the work in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty. Our political leadership remains positively disposed towards our possible ratification of the Treaty, following our signature in 2013. We are currently looking into possible means for enhancing our capacity for compliance with the Treaty provisions, including under the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Bangladesh will continue to participate in existing confidence-building and transparency measures, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We appreciate the international community's enhanced attention to preventing the illicit transfer of arms and such transfer's possible interface with violent extremism and terrorism. We remain concerned over the growing use, inter alia, of improvised explosive devices targeting civilians and United Nations peacekeepers. We underscore the need for increased support for developing and least developed countries, including the troop-contributing countries among them, to build the capacity of their concerned agencies or units to counter such threats.

Despite the perceived impasse in the Disarmament Commission, we continue to harbour high hopes for its potential and look forward to sustaining its relevance by further enhancing the breadth and quality of its substantive outcomes. We hope that the positive

dynamics we witnessed in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament last week will also help create momentum in the Commission's work towards making the current triennial cycle break some new ground in the United Nations disarmament agenda. Bangladesh would remain unwaveringly committed to that objective.

Mr. Manongi (Tanzania): Allow me to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as the other members of the Bureau, on their deserved election.

We also align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Uganda on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.355). In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We believe that the Commission is meeting at a time when a number of global challenges continue to demand its attention and indeed action. It is in this context that the General Assembly has called for a results-oriented discussion in the Commission's work. Such an outcome is essential in strengthening international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a matter of significant concern to the United Republic of Tanzania. It is our firm belief that nuclear risks, including nuclear accidents or strategic miscalculations, pose an enduring threat not only to States but also to humankind.

We continue to reject the false logic that somehow nuclear weapons are a guarantee of peace. For our part, we have never felt at peace on account of the nuclear arsenals held either by our friends or their allies. In an unstable global environment, where some non-State actors increasingly seek the elimination of Governments, there is no guarantee that such heinous actors would not resort to whatever means they can lay their hands upon.

The Commission has a responsibility it cannot evade if it is to sustain its legitimacy and relevance. The General Assembly has called on the Disarmament Commission to examine and make recommendations on the various problems in the field of disarmament and to promote the implementation of the decisions it takes. Recommendations to the General Assembly for

decisions or actions need to be made, and the primary task in that regard rests with the Commission. We therefore wish to reaffirm our belief in the relevance and centrality of the Disarmament Commission as the sole, specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery.

We note with concern, however, that the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly in the course of the past 15 years. The inability or unwillingness of the Commission to propose credible recommendations to the General Assembly illustrates a deeper sense of mistrust in promoting our collective goals and aspirations. Regrettably, this lack of progress undermines our purported commitment to disarmament and stands in the way of any meaningful progress.

In the meantime, we continue to recognize the ever-present danger of nuclear weapons and reiterate the importance of achieving total and irreversible disarmament. We see the use of such weapons as having nothing other than catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. We endorse the call for full adherence of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and underscore the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Pending the elimination of all nuclear weapons, we renew our call upon all nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional and legally binding security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, including in the context of the nuclear-weapon-free zones instruments.

In terms of reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation, we note the following. First, nuclear facilities must be safeguarded within or above the highest degree of systematic safeguards set forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Secondly, there is a right to the use of peaceful nuclear technology, as its vast potential for social and economic development must be preserved. In addition, we recognize the existential threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to the peace and security of our nation, our continent and our global community, especially if they were to fall in the hands of non-State actors. We therefore call on States to take appropriate steps to prevent groups, such as terrorists, from acquiring weapons of any kind.

In conclusion, we also reiterate our concern regarding the threat presented by the trafficking of

conventional arms. The regulation of conventional arms is of the utmost importance to preventing conflicts, the displacement of people and increased poverty in conflict areas. In that regard, Tanzania signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 3 June 2013 and strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In the same vein, we wish the proposed agenda items for the upcoming sixth Biennial Meeting of States to include the following two items: first, the joint and simultaneous operations between Member States as a contribution to curbing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and secondly, enhancing information-sharing among Member States on the prevention of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to offer my congratulations and that of my delegation on your election to chair the Disarmament Commission. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Mr. Fodé Seck, for his service as Chair at the last session, which laid the basis for the current Commission cycle. I would also like to welcome the presence of and briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355), and thank his entire team for their work and dedication.

The delegation of Argentina fully associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic tomorrow on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Notwithstanding the foregoing, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to briefly make a few comments in our national capacity to add to these deliberations.

At a time when we have made progress in defining the objectives of sustainable development for the post-2015 period, we cannot and must not overlook the work ahead of us in relation to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Disarmament Commission has not been outside of the crisis that has affected the disarmament machinery. Nevertheless, the deliberative nature of the Commission makes it a forum where, on the basis of dialogue, we can overcome the current deadlock that has been in place for more than a decade. In that regard, we would like to stress the value of dialogue within the framework of the Commission,

beyond the progress that we can achieve in this second year of the cycle on the consideration of the agenda items. Given the importance of the two topics under consideration by the Commission, frank dialogue in this deliberative forum will enable us to move forward on nuclear disarmament and build confidence with respect to the objectives of transparency, cooperation and peace that drive all of us without distinction.

For Argentina, the Disarmament Commission is a forum of interest worth maintaining and kick-starting to the greatest extent possible. Accordingly, we call upon all delegations to combine their efforts and adopt a pragmatic approach with a view to ensuring that this session of the Commission is productive. To that end, Mr. Chair, you can count on my delegation's full cooperation.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at this year's substantive session. We also extend our congratulations to the Chairs of the Working Groups on their respective elections. My delegation is looking forward to working with them to make this session a success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Uganda and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.355). In my national capacity, allow me to make a few general remarks on the two agenda items before us, which my delegation is looking forward to discussing in detail during the thematic debates.

South Africa remains committed to multilateralism as the best tool to deal with issues affecting international peace and security. In this regard, it is South Africa's considered view that the United Nations Disarmament Commission provides an inclusive platform for deliberations on critical issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The UNDC has in the past made valuable contributions to our work in the field of disarmament and international security and we call on all delegations to show the flexibility needed to allow this body to fulfil its responsibilities. The fact that the Disarmament Commission has not made any progress since 1999 has become a growing concern. It is my delegation's hope that the discussions and deliberations during the next two weeks will be based

on genuine political will and good faith and that we will be able to make progress.

At the general debate of the seventieth session of the General Assembly in September 2015, President Zuma spoke as follows about the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt an outcome document:

“The failure of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach an agreement at the 2015 Review Conference — in the year that marks 70 years since the first atomic bombs were detonated in Japan — is a major setback to our commitment to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons” (A/70/PV.14, p. 9).

This major setback only serves to amplify the lack of progress in the fulfilment of nuclear obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States in particular. South Africa reiterates its call upon the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and engage in negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament, in compliance with their legal obligations under the NPT, as well as through the implementation of the various undertakings contained in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 final documents.

Notwithstanding this disheartening reality, South Africa welcomes ongoing discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which was established pursuant to resolution 70/33 and which met in Geneva in February 2016. My delegation looks forward to actively participating in the upcoming sessions of the Working Group, as it represents yet another opportunity for all Member States to make their voices heard on this important subject. My delegation wishes to encourage other Member States to also actively participate in this process. We can no longer be complacent about the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament.

With regard to conventional weapons, South Africa remains fully committed to the ongoing implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as one of the few instruments we have at our disposal to ensure that conventional weapons are traded in a transparent manner and that the devastating impact of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is not allowed to flourish.

In this regard, my delegation urges all Member States that have not submitted reports on their arms transfers to do so urgently.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to reiterate the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the role it can play in reinforcing the importance of transparency in the conventional arms trade. In addition, my delegation is pleased to note the progress that is being made to ensure that the ATT Secretariat is fully operational, as was reflected in the final report of the Extraordinary Meeting of States Parties to the ATT, held in Geneva in February 2016.

In closing, my delegation looks forward to thematic debates and stands ready to participate actively during discussions and to work with all delegations towards achieving consensus during this session.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections. We look forward to continued discussion on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to the disarmament and international security agenda. While recognizing the difficulties in the implementation of existing international treaties and in bringing new ones into force, as well as the deadlock in the disarmament negotiations, we fully reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and strengthening the current disarmament machinery and international cooperation in order to reinforce the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind faces today. Ukraine considers the total elimination of nuclear weapons to be the only absolute guarantee against the scourge of nuclear warfare and supports the call for the immediate adoption of a comprehensive international agreement banning nuclear weapons. Pursuing this goal, my country has taken a proactive approach and set a pattern to follow by abandoning its nuclear capability and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in November 1994, as well as by taking concrete steps in March 2012 to eliminate the use of highly enriched uranium for civilian purposes

through the removal of all existing stocks from its national territory.

At the same time, after Ukraine's decision to renounce its nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation occupied part of our territory on the artificial and groundless pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking population. It is needless to say that this occurred in grave violation of the imperative norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the well-known Budapest Memorandum, which ensured the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the inviolability of its borders and the principle of non-interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs.

Ukraine is concerned by the accelerated militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Donbas region, which further undermines international security and regional stability. Moreover, Ukraine is deeply concerned by the steps Russia has taken towards the deployment of nuclear weapons on the currently occupied territory of Crimea. The Russian occupiers are completely restoring the Soviet-era nuclear storage facilities and have already deployed the means of delivering nuclear weapons, such as warships and combat aircraft. To facilitate this activity, Russia may go even further by installing uranium-enrichment facilities, organizing the production of dual-use materials and applying technologies linked to nuclear weapons on the peninsula. The implementation of these plans would directly infringe the non-nuclear status of Ukraine and further undermine the international non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes.

The occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the ongoing Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine have left Ukraine without due control of its national system to regulate its nuclear sites and the materials located there. In these circumstances, we cannot prevent illicit trafficking and the malicious use of such materials by terrorists. As a result of Russian aggression, Ukraine cannot resume control over more than 400 kilometres of its border. Those sections of the border can be used by traffickers to illegally transfer radiation sources from Russia into Ukraine and further into Europe. Recent reports from Ukrainian law enforcement agencies demonstrate that this is a real scenario.

Even while under Russian aggression, Ukraine has remained a reliable partner and continues to

fulfil its obligations under the NPT as a non-nuclear State. Ukraine continues to regard the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and provides comprehensive support to ensure its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization. At the same time, we proceed from the understanding that the only way to protect the world from nuclear proliferation is to make Ukraine an example by way of its successful renunciation of nuclear weapons. Otherwise it will become much more difficult to convince any other country to refrain from developing a national nuclear programme.

Since the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum have been totally ignored by the Russian Federation, to which it is a signatory, we continue to call on the Conference on Disarmament to urgently develop and conclude a multilateral, legally binding instrument in order to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

While emphasizing the importance of the implementation of the decisions taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Ukraine would like also to support the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We consider the convening of a conference on that issue to be a priority task, the successful implementation of which would increase regional and international security and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In that context, we also encourage universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose entry into force will constitute a tangible stride towards attaining the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. It is of the greatest importance that the integrity of the norms set out by the CTBT be respected. While I do not downplay the importance of the ongoing voluntary moratoriums on nuclear-weapon tests, which are highly valuable, they are no substitute for a binding global ban. In that regard, we call on the relevant Member States to urgently ratify the CTBT.

Ukraine continues to support the development of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and calls on all NPT parties that have not yet done so to conclude and strictly implement comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA, as well as the additional protocols. In that regard, we condemn Russia's seizure of Ukraine's nuclear facilities

in Crimea because violent acts of this type impede the implementation of IAEA safeguards on the peninsula.

We also continue to insist that negotiating and concluding the fissile-material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine strongly calls for finding common ground on the issue of existing fissile material stocks and the immediate commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Addressing the enormous destructive power of conventional armaments remains of utmost importance to the international community, especially in the context of regional security. Foreign military aggression against Ukraine with the use of the regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition has significantly damaged the existing system of arms control and reduction of conventional forces. The idea of conventional disarmament has also been discredited.

I would also remind the Commission of the illegal transfers of conventional arms from the Russian Federation to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Donbas region of Ukraine. Despite the international community's demand to stop such aggression, the Russian Federation continues to dispatch large amounts of weaponry into the territory of Ukraine, thereby deliberately upsetting not only subregional security and stability but that of all of Europe. Such a situation is intolerable.

Ukraine remains a devoted advocate of the efforts within the United Nations system and at the regional level to address the illicit small arms and light weapons issue in all its aspects. In that regard, we expect the substantial outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held 6 to 10 June in New York City.

In conclusion, we would like to wish the Chair every success in his future work and reiterate our full support to that end.

Mr. Nagao (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament

Commission (UNDC), and the members of the UNDC Bureau on their election. I assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The UNDC was once renowned as the leading deliberative body of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. However, for about 16 years now it has remained in deadlock. Although Japan will continue to actively participate in the UNDC, all of us here should be aware that the lack of substantive outcome in this body has put its *raison d'être* into serious question, and we should cooperate to find a way to revitalize its work.

Looking back on the recent situation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan is concerned that, as a result of discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and effective measures on nuclear disarmament, the rift between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States seems to have widened. Japan has consistently stated that to promote nuclear disarmament, practical and concrete measures based on cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States are necessary.

Japan ascribes importance to the following measures, among others, as practical and concrete measures: first, enhanced transparency of nuclear forces; secondly, deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons by all States that possess them and eventual multilateralization of negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons; thirdly, early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); fourthly, the early commencement and conclusion of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and fifthly, promotion of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

With regard to the CTBT, since last September Japan, together with Kazakhstan, has been a coordinator for facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT. Japan will continue to strongly call for the early ratification of the CTBT by all States listed in annex 2, and to work to facilitate the CTBT's early entry into force. All moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained, pending the Treaty's entry into force.

We believe that nuclear disarmament must be promoted on the basis of two understandings: a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the reality of the security situation. Japan, more than any other

country, fully and directly understands the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In this regard, Japan has been working very long and hard to spread across borders and generations awareness of the reality of the devastation that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to deepen such understanding. Awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons fundamentally underpins all nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

In terms of security, despite the repeated calls of the international community, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and launched ballistic missiles in February and March. This series of provocations in a short period of time seriously undermined the peace and security of North-East Asia and of the entire world. They are serious violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005. Furthermore, they represent a serious challenge to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, Japan wishes to lodge a serious protest against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strongly condemns its nuclear tests and missile launches. Japan reiterates its strong demand that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately and fully implement relevant Council resolutions, in particular the most recently adopted resolution 2270 (2016), and other commitments. Such a severe security environment must always be taken into consideration in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a basis for promoting the concrete and practical nuclear-disarmament measures based on the aforementioned two understandings, it is imperative that the NPT regime be maintained and strengthened. In order for that to happen, it is vital that a meaningful outcome be achieved at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Seizing every opportunity, Japan will devote its utmost efforts to that end in the context of the 2020 NPT review process, which will start next year.

This year, Japan holds the presidency of the Group of Seven (G-7) and will host the meeting of G-7 Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Hiroshima on 10 and 11 April and the summit meeting in Ise-Shima in May. Making the most of these opportunities, Japan will work to make progress in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons.

Addressing the enormous damage caused by conventional arms continues to be of utmost importance to the international community. It is an area in which United Nations leadership is needed. Japan has been supportive of the great role the United Nations has played in this field. In that regard, I would like to refer to two significant challenges that Member States will need to confront in the coming months.

First, Japan considers it very important to ensure that the Arms Trade Treaty is effectively implemented and universalized. We would like to encourage all Member States to join and ratify the ATT. As one of the original sponsors of resolution 61/89, which set the ATT process in motion, Japan will actively work with other Member States and civil society to achieve the effective implementation of the Treaty.

Secondly, the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an important opportunity for the United Nations efforts to make progress in tackling the enduring problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Japan highly commends Ambassador Rattray, Chair-designate of the sixth Biennial Meeting, for the transparent and efficient manner in which he has been conducting preparatory work for the Conference in June. Japan will continue to engage actively in order to achieve a successful outcome at the sixth Biennial Meeting.

Last but not least, in order to make a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery, now is the time for us to consider ways to revitalize the UNDC so that it can produce beneficial guidelines and recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation, in accordance with its original mandate. To that end, Japan will continue to provide all possible support to the Chair and contribute to productive deliberations in this important body.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the chairmanship and assure you of my delegation's support in the fulfilment of your duties.

The importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in the context of the disarmament machinery was outlined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 (resolution S-10/2), where it

was stipulated that the function of the UNDC would be, *inter alia*, to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and consider elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. It is clear that in order to fulfil its mandate the UNDC needs to look at issues in a comprehensive manner and in context.

Israel supports a vision of a Middle East free from war, hostility, weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It is a vision that all of the region's inhabitants should aspire to, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. At the same time, Israel believes that arms control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist. They need to be built on confidence-building measures that are durable and sustainable and must be formulated in a way that addresses the relevant circumstances, challenges and threats prevailing in the region. Those processes cannot be dissociated from the problematic surrounding environment that gives rise to them.

Since our last deliberations, the Middle East has been further destabilized and radicalized. The erosion of State sovereignty has never been so apparent. Territories that in the past have been under the control of central regimes are now being contested or overrun by terrorist groups to which those territories have been ceded or abandoned. In today's Middle East, chemical weapons are, unfortunately, still in use. While we recognize that the removal and destruction of the Syrian regime's declared chemical weapons was indeed an important and significant achievement, we are concerned by the erosion of the absolute prohibition against the use of chemical weapons and the evolution of a more lenient norm on our borders — one which includes the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime not only prior to its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, but also after undertaking that obligation. We are also concerned about the maintenance of residual capabilities and as the expansion of use of chemical weapons to other non-State actors and areas.

Iran remains the most significant threat to the security of the Middle East and beyond. Its recent ballistic missile tests indicate that the threat posed by Iran has not diminished — quite the contrary — and they signal its attitude towards fulfilment of its international obligations. Iran's agreement with the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany (P5+1)

provides it, *inter alia*, with continuous economic relief, which enables the Iranian regime to further increase its support for terror organizations by providing them with additional advanced weapons. Even after the agreement between Iran and the P5+1, Iran's Supreme Leader declared that he remains committed to seeking Israel's destruction and avowed no moment of serenity for Israel until its destruction. Iran's clandestine activities in the nuclear domain in the past and its continuing acts of concealment and duplicity, taken together with its policy of aggression and hostility, raise fundamental questions as to whether regional players understand fully the duty to comply with international legal obligations.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is clear that no arms control or disarmament process can be detached from reality. Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region, which include all of the challenges and threats that the region faces individually and collectively. Such a dialogue, based on widely accepted principles of consensus, can emanate only from within the region and must address the threat perceived by all regional parties in an inclusive manner, with a view to enhancing and improving their security. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, provides the essential basis for creating a new security paradigm in a region fraught with arms, wars, conflicts, disintegration of national territories and human suffering.

Accordingly, Israel participated at a senior and authoritative level in all of the five multilateral meetings held in Switzerland to discuss the arrangements and conditions necessary for convening a conference on establishing the Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and by that, attested to the importance that Israel ascribes to the need to redefine a new regional security paradigm for the Middle East. Despite Israel's positive attitude towards continued engagement and the positive response of the Israeli public to an invitation to participate, the sixth round of consultations was postponed several times and did not take place due to the disengagement of Arab States and others, leading to the halting of the process.

In 1999, at its fifty-fourth session, the UNDC issued a report (A/54/42) enumerating many important elements that contribute to the necessary foundation

for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The report clarifies that such a complex and sensitive security architecture should be the product of the specific circumstances of the region concerned, emanate exclusively from the States within the region concerned and be pursued by all States of the region. Furthermore, such a zone needs to be based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Israel views the threat caused by the proliferation of conventional weapons as critical and is aware of their possible mass effect. Israel individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders is actively working to counter this menace through the implementation of UNDC resolutions, international norms and standards, and national tools and mechanisms. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects, together with the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, is an important tool in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms.

Israel welcomes the successful meeting held in New York in June 2015 on the International Tracing Instrument and is looking forward to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, to be held this year, as these deliberations and exchanges of views are important to the whole process. More than ever, the challenge of diversion and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons requires our concerned attention and efforts.

Israel welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014. As a signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the Treaty, acknowledges the remarkable developments that occurred in the international sphere through the creation of this important agreement and looks forward to the second Conference of States Parties, to be held this coming August. In addition, we look forward to engaging further in the preparation for the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, scheduled for December of this year. We are particularly interested in the Review Conference's anticipated in-depth treatment of the issue of improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Israel continues to believe that direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security challenges

among the regional parties is key to any meaningful, consensual discussion on this matter. For its part, Israel will continue to seek such a meaningful regional discussion that could lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of El Salvador would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this substantive session, and we also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau. We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement to be made by the delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, while adding some considerations and views particular to my country.

El Salvador remains firm in its commitment to and support for initiatives for the promotion and strengthening of disarmament, international security and the culture of peace at the global level. We believe that they are essential tools for achieving a global community without danger of weapons that threaten the livelihood of all peoples. That is why we see in the meetings of the First Committee an opportunity to continue pursuing that goal, and to achieve a world free of armament threats.

The Republic of El Salvador supports actions aimed at strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation as well as efforts to renew the international community's commitment to advance towards the definitive elimination of weapons of mass destruction through multilateral negotiations, in accordance with the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency, given that, for our country, international peace and security depend not only on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction but also on restrictions and prohibitions on conventional weapons of indiscriminate effect and on the irresponsible use of such weapons.

Allow me to recall that nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to the environment and to the very survival of the human race. This is an indisputable reality, and in this regard we note with concern the lack of concrete action and of pragmatic monitoring of this phenomenon. El Salvador reaffirms the need to move towards the priority objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore express our opposition to the

development of new types of nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing ones.

We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in the strategic doctrines and security policies of all the nations of planet Earth. We express our concern at the humanitarian impact and global effects of any accidental or intentional nuclear detonation. We reiterate the importance of establishing internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we propose as a model the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which proudly confirmed our region as the first zone to be declared free of nuclear weapons by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We are aware that recent years have been productive in terms of the development of regulatory instruments in the area of conventional weapons. That is why we welcome the continued implementation of practical confidence-building measures as a tool to alleviate and defuse tensions that could lead to an escalation in a conflict between brotherly countries. We therefore urge Member States to continue to use and improve upon these instruments, which have proved their worth by the trust they have generated. In addition, we hope that the Arms Trade Treaty, as a legally binding instrument, can contribute to addressing the consequences that the unregulated trade and the illicit trafficking in weapons have had in many countries around the world.

El Salvador believes that, now more than ever, it is important to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We acknowledge that this is a critical moment and we express our disappointment at the limited support generated for actions geared towards implementing the Treaty. We are aware of the importance of universalization of the NPT, and that is why we urge States that have yet to do so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply with commitments assumed under article VI of the Treaty, with the sole purpose of moving towards the total elimination of those kinds of weapons.

The Republic of El Salvador reiterates its profound concern at the threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that the use or threat of use thereof would

be a patent violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, constituting at the same time a clear violation of international law and, above all, of international humanitarian law. El Salvador faces grave security challenges. Like other countries in the region, it is beset by groups on the margins of the law that threaten and use violence as an instrument for achieving their goals. To that end, we believe that the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a corollary of the actions committed by those groups and poses a grave threat to our security.

The illicit trafficking, accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuel a culture of violence and impunity. Therefore, we must spare no effort in combating this scourge. Aware that this situation affects the lives of thousands of people in the region and around the world, El Salvador was one of the first 50 countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, thereby contributing to getting this important instrument off the ground.

The problems facing the international community in the areas of development, poverty eradication and eliminating illnesses and disease are directly linked to disarmament. That is why I want to conclude by stating that El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continue working, mobilizing efforts, promoting and participating in international forums that contribute to raising awareness of the grave consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction and the real and imminent threat posed by the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. El Salvador will do its utmost to achieve the priority goal of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, devoting special attention to taking measures to neutralize the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Ms. Telford (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom consistently champions the United Nations disarmament machinery framework as an essential part of the rules-based international system. The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary said in his statement to the General Assembly last year (see A/70/PV.18) that Britain has always believed that the stability we seek in relations between nations is best realized through the framework of laws, norms and institutions that together constitute the rules-based international system that was developed after the Second World War, with the Charter of the United Nations at its heart.

The Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee are as relevant today as when they were first created. They are mutually reinforcing. We believe that a reinvigoration of any one of the bodies will have a positive effect on the others. This year, the United Kingdom was pleased to have submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a proposal for a programme of work which remains under consideration.

Since we were last here in this room at the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), we have seen an example of what can be achieved by working together through the rules-based system underpinned by the non-proliferation norm. After more than a decade of tough negotiations, on 14 July, we, alongside our E3+3 partners, agreed a joint comprehensive plan of action with Iran that imposes strict limits and inspections on its nuclear programme. Our focus is now on the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The United Kingdom has a strong record on nuclear disarmament and meeting our obligations as a member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We remain determined to continue to work with partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, to build trust and confidence between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, and to take tangible steps toward a safer and more stable world, in which countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

We have steadily reduced the size of our own nuclear forces by well over 50 per cent since our Cold War peak. Our 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review confirmed that we will retain no more than 120 operationally available warheads and, by the mid-2020s, we will reduce our overall nuclear-weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads, meeting the commitments set out in our 2010 Review. Disarmament verification is a key issue to be addressed if we are to obtain, and remain at, total global nuclear disarmament. This area of work is challenging and demanding, but only through sustained multilateral efforts will the technical and procedural issues of disarmament verification be solved.

We are therefore delighted to be a part of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, working with all the permanent members of the Security Council and over 20 non-nuclear weapon

States. Along with this, the United Kingdom is also continuing its bilateral programmes with the United States and Norway. It is important that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States work together so that in the future verification can take place safely and securely, and provide all States with high confidence in actions taken towards disarmament.

The United Kingdom also supports the goal of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to end nuclear-weapon test explosions. We fully support efforts to develop the verification regime for the CTBT, including early completion and provisional operation of the international monitoring system. We have now reached the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and we encourage any remaining States that are outside of the Treaty to sign up and make a commitment not to carry out any nuclear-weapon-test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. The entry into force of the CTBT would be a tangible step towards a safer and more stable world, one in which the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can become a reality.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization demonstrated its value earlier this year by detecting the nuclear test carried out by North Korea. The United Kingdom strongly condemns North Korea's nuclear test as a clear and deliberate violation of a number of Security Council resolutions. North Korea's actions continue to present a threat to regional and international security. The United Kingdom strongly supports Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), adopted in response to these provocations, and endorses and encourages the rigorous implementation of the new measures by the international community.

The United Kingdom supported resolution 67/53, establishing a Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile-material cut-off treaty (FMCT) mandated to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We continue to believe the outcome of the work of the FMCT Group of Governmental Experts will put the Committee on Disarmament in a more informed position when negotiations begin.

Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms are an important endeavour and

one which the United Kingdom fully supports. This can be seen in our commitment to confidence-building measures, including annual reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, our transparency reports to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and associated Protocols, and our annual reports to the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The universalization of all those instruments would be a giant leap towards better transparency and confidence in the field of conventional arms. We call on those States not yet parties to such instruments to join them without delay.

The existing overarching framework of conventional arms control and the confidence- and security-building measures, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Documents, contains many effective elements, which we should look to preserve. However, it is clear that the regimes are not functioning optimally and need to be updated to make them fit for purpose in the context of the evolving international security landscape. We will continue to support our partners in their efforts to review those initiatives.

The year 2015 also saw the adoption of some further confidence-building measures. The successful first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in Cancún in August, agreed on key decisions that provide a clear direction for the effective implementation of the ATT and its associated transparency. The United Kingdom believes that the ATT provides an effective framework for confidence-building in the field of conventional arms, but like the other instruments just mentioned underscores that its success depends on universalization and robust implementation. We believe that the Treaty has the potential to change the lives of those most affected by the unregulated and illicit trade in arms. The United Kingdom is very proud to have been one of the leading advocates of the ATT from the very beginning. We look forward to furthering this important work as we move towards the second Conference of States Parties later this year. We will continue to provide assistance where possible to those looking to join and implement the Treaty.

Last year, we provided \$150,000 to States to sponsor their attendance at the first Conference of States Parties and plan to use the remaining funds to do the same for the second Conference of States Parties. We have also

funded projects focusing on coordinating and mapping ATT assistance, technical implementation support and strengthened capacity among Commonwealth States to implement the ATT through a Wilton Park conference.

The United Kingdom remains committed to combating the threats posed by small arms and light weapons, the single most significant contributor to conflicts, violence and crime. We must turn these negative impacts into positive action in order to build peaceful and stable societies. The United Kingdom's priorities include assisting with stockpile management, including surplus disposal by destruction and ensuring better-regulated exports. Our efforts are focused particularly in Libya and the Sahel, where illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is fuelling instability and insecurity.

We look forward to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to refocus international attention on those areas. The United Kingdom remains resolute in its pledge to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by all explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines. The United Kingdom is fully committed to achieving the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including their globalization.

The United Kingdom withdrew all cluster munitions from operational service in 2008 and completed the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions in December 2013, more than five years ahead of the schedule set by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The fourth phase of the Falkland Islands demining was concluded in March 2016, taking the total number of cleared minefields to 35, and the United Kingdom is considering further projects to clear the remaining minefields. In 2015 alone, the United Kingdom's mine-action work in developing countries resulted in the removal of more than 22,000 landmines and explosive remnants of war, released more than 37 million square metres of land, which resulted in people having better access to basic services, increased economic opportunities and improved safety. The United Kingdom's project reached more than 115,000 people through mine-risk education activities. The United Kingdom's projects worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to

manage their own landmine and explosive remnants of war programmes.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom looks forward to successful discussions in the 2016 session of the UNDC.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the other members of the Commission's Bureau as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups on their respective elections.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

As the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the United Nations Disarmament Commission's buried potential needs no further mention. Building on the momentum of the constructive week-long discussions during the recently concluded Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, inclusiveness, focus and the effective use of our time must guide our work here. While we acknowledge that it will not be easy to overcome years of impasse in progress on the substantive items on the UNDC's disarmament agenda, a sense of comfort with the status quo would defeat the purpose of us being here today or for the next three weeks. A successful session will depend on our collective resolve, flexibility and creativity to examine the areas of convergence and improve our working methods while applying the less-is-more approach in our deliberations.

Malaysia is unwavering in its conviction that, despite the failed 2015 Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the three pillars underpinning Treaty — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — must continue to guide our vision of total and complete disarmament. We urge the game-changers in this process to show flexibility and support, pursue good-faith negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race at an early date with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament, and create a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls. The diplomatic achievement of the adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 partners in July 2015, indicates that we can still achieve progress by dropping old habits and negative mentalities in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The year 2016 also marked the twentieth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The opinion delivers a moral argument for the total elimination of nuclear weapons while declaring the legal obligations to pursue nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We see merit in building on this approach, reiterating the urgency to commence multilateral negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention.

Malaysia believes that the UNDC should focus discussions on concrete proposals for the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as elements for comprehensive conventions on nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the core of the NAM proposal is the joint submission to the General Assembly by Costa Rica and Malaysia of a model nuclear-weapon convention that proposes legal, technical and political elements for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world, which deserves further support. Malaysia stands ready to work with Member States on this initiative, as well as on any other proposals that further our aims to achieve general and complete disarmament through clearly defined timelines.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation pledges its full support for the preparatory work leading up to the convening of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York in June 2016. Malaysia remains committed to the adoption of adequate and strict domestic laws to effectively control the circulation of and illicit trade in conventional arms. We therefore continue to support confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We believe, moreover, that the opportunity exists to narrow the gaps among the divergent views of the membership in this area.

While we note the views of several delegations on the breadth of the UNDC's discussions, adding a third item to the Commission's agenda should not detract us from focusing on coming up with tangible recommendations on the current priorities that guide the Commission's work.

In conclusion, Malaysia remains hopeful that Member States will come forward and contribute to an outcome that is action-oriented, sets forth timelines and makes recommendations. We commit our full support and cooperation in this process to you, Mr. Chair, and to the members of the Bureau, as well as to all Member States.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time that we are taking the floor allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for presiding over the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and that delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

At the outset, I wish to refer to the weapons that cause the most harm to humankind, namely, small arms and light weapons, whose proliferation is a serious challenge for our societies. In the case of developing countries, the destabilizing effects of those weapons when they end up in criminal hands are quite well known and have contributed to worsening violence and their use on a daily basis, not only by common criminals but also by transnational organized crime. Peru is determined to combat the situation, and in that regard it has proposed domestically to strengthen its response capacity with the creation, in 2012, of the National Regulatory Entity for Security Services, Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use, with a view to preserving the peace, security and well-being of its citizens.

Externally, we are party to international arms-control regimes. In the Andean subregion, we have been implementing the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. We are working on drawing up a legal framework for the marking of small arms and light weapons and their munitions. In our hemisphere, Peru is a party to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

Given the concern of the international community over the manufacture, transfer and illicit trade of

small arms and light weapons and their uncontrolled proliferation, Peru would like to reiterate its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We are aware of the fact that the trafficking and diversion of weapons significantly increases other illicit activities that undermine the implementation of international law, governability and peaceful and safe coexistence for our citizens. That is why we are committed to fully implementing those instruments.

My country attributes particular importance to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), an instrument whose objective is to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in conventional weapons and prevent their diversion. In keeping with that objective, on 16 February, Peru deposited its instrument of ratification for the Treaty. With this step, Peru will be a State party as of 15 May. With a view to implementing the ATT and with the support of the European Union, we have been developing a set of activities whose objective is to help the sectors that are involved in developing the scope and purposes of the Treaty. We should point out that we have a road map where we have planned other activities that are focused on strengthening capabilities necessary for proper compliance with the ATT.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is also a topic of great interest for my country. In that regard, Peru reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the full and equal application of its three pillars. Likewise, we reaffirm the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT.

Peru also calls for the universalization of regimes to ban weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, I would like to express my gratitude for the work that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has undertaken in recent years. Peru is a party to all the multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, given that it is one of the pillars of our foreign policy and proof of my country's willingness to achieve international peace and security through complete disarmament. That firm position led Peru to be one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in November

1997, due to the fact that my country attaches special importance of the Treaty as a key instrument in the framework of international efforts to gradually reduce nuclear weapons and prevent nuclear proliferation. Peru reiterates the importance of its swift entry into force and urges the States in annex 2 of the Treaty to accelerate the signing and ratification process for this instrument.

With respect to the disarmament machinery, my delegation believes that the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament is a priority that should be addressed, as it is the forum and the ideal body for negotiating disarmament and international-security matters. We have been concerned that in the past few years the member States of the Conference on Disarmament have not been able to reach an agreement on the programme of work for the substantive treatment of its agenda items. My country urges all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political will in order to guarantee a start to the substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Likewise, my country would like to express its gratitude for the work done by Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, Chair of the Disarmament Commission in 2015, to achieve an agreement on the agenda of the Commission for the current three-year cycle. However, we regret the lack of progress within the Commission, and we are concerned that substantive recommendations have not taken shape in the respective working groups. My country believes that this year, under the leadership of Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, the Disarmament Commission will be able to find greater political will, flexibility and cooperation from all States.

I would like to refer very briefly to the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is based in my country, due to the important role it plays and the support it provides in helping States in the region to move forward with a set of initiatives in the area of disarmament and confidence-building measures in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, munitions and explosives.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by reasserting the unwavering commitment of Peru to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We have pledged to make our greatest efforts in the work of the Disarmament Commission since we are convinced that

the achievements that we can make in this area will help to strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): We wish to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairman and his dedicated team for their efforts during the last session. We also congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your respective elections. My delegation is aware of the challenging task that you have assumed, and we assure you of our full support in this session.

We welcomed the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs this morning and appreciate his contribution to our debate. We recognize the important role the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) was assigned to play as the main specialized subsidiary body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters. However, the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the Assembly in the course of the past 16 years. With each and every substantive session in which it fails to do so, the UNDC's credibility and relevance in the disarmament machinery erodes further.

In the face of the present security challenges, on the one hand, and the new opportunities, on the other, the UNDC now has to take up its original role and fulfil its mandate. Success to that end will undoubtedly depend on the extent to which we can collectively show flexibility. At the beginning of this session, my delegation declares its readiness to support the revitalization of the work of the Commission in its current cycle and the achievement of a consensus that could emerge in this room in that regard.

We believe that the option to expand the agenda should be further explored at future sessions, since an additional agenda item would allow the UNDC to discuss new developments and challenges in the areas of international security and multilateral disarmament. Needless to say, in assessing additional agenda items, our delegation will take into account the principles of relevance, competence and efficiency.

We acknowledge the progress made in the conventional weapons cluster. We hope to see similar progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we are aware of the growing interest in the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. Yet not only nuclear, but chemical and biological weapons also have humanitarian consequences, and in Turkey we have

been unfortunately witnessing this reality in every chemical weapon attacks that takes place in Syria.

The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime constitutes a breach of international humanitarian law and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such a breach cannot be disregarded by the international community. We therefore support the joint work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the competent international body and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in attributing responsibility to the perpetrators. To the same end, we expect the Security Council to implement its resolutions, including 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015). Moreover, as the UNDC is a forum for deliberations on disarmament matters, it should also take this issue under consideration within the confines of its mandate.

We also take the opportunity to underline the need for a focused and result-oriented discussion on the items on the Commission's agenda. Serious consideration should also be given to possibility of reducing the duration of the Commission's substantive sessions.

Before I conclude, I would reiterate our support for you, Sir as well as for the Chairs of the working groups.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I remind delegations that, in accordance with the General Assembly's rules of procedure, annex V, paragraphs 9 and 10, the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): My country condemns the use of chemical weapons and calls for bringing the perpetrators of such horrific acts and the Member States supporting terrorists to justice.

I would like to address the basis of the allegations of the representative of the Israeli regime. It seems that she is trying, to no avail, to distract those attending this meeting from the fact that Israel is the sole and only possessor of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and nuclear weapons in the Middle East. She has also forgotten the historical fact that her hostile regime was the first to use WMDs against civilians in Palestine in

May 1948, by injecting the water supply of a Palestinian city with a typhoid agent, according to the records of the International Committee of the Red Cross on that incident. Israel's use of WMDs also targeted Egyptian and Syrian civilians in the years 1947 and 1948 by spreading cholera, as confirmed by journalist Thomas J. Hamilton in a New York Times published on 24 July 1948.

I would also like to address the baseless allegations made in the statement of the Turkish representative. I will not repeat the well-known facts regarding his regime's alliance with terrorists in Syria, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). But I would like to refer him and other colleagues at this meeting to a case presented in December 2015 by the Turkish parliamentarian, Mr. Eren Erdem, a member of the Republican People's Party of Turkey. Mr. Erdem said that ISIS terrorists in Syria received all the necessary materials to produce deadly sarin gas via Turkey and accused Ankara of failing to investigate Turkish supply routes used to provide terrorists with the toxic-gas ingredients.

The Parliamentarian showed the Turkish Parliament a copy of criminal case number 2013/120, which was commenced by the General Prosecutor's Office in the city of Adana, in southern Turkey. The investigation revealed that a number of Turkish citizens took part in negotiations with ISIS on supplying sarin gas. The Adana authorities conducted raids and arrested 13 suspects. However, a week later the case was closed, and all suspects were released and later crossed the Turkish-Syrian border.

The parliamentarian further confirmed that the evidence showed that the Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation was involved, and there were reports that Turkish Minister of Justice, Bekir Bozdağ, was also implicated in the incident. I would like to ask the Turkish representative to allow the Joint Investigative Mechanism to meet Mr. Erdem in Turkey and examine all documents and evidence he presented to the Turkish Parliament.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of the Israeli regime's ridiculous allegations against my country are a smokescreen to hide Israel's atrocities committed against the Palestinian people, its continuing violations of Palestinian human rights and its ongoing acts of aggression against Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian people under the

guise of a hypothetical Iranian threat, which is an extravagant deception more than anything else.

Iran is not threatening anybody. We are not threatening to use force. Unlike the Israeli officials, we are not saying that all options are on the table. I wish that those who continue to make threats would read the Charter of the United Nations, which states that, "the threat or use of force" is against international law.

The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime has foiled all international and regional efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and continues to pose a serious threat to the security of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the Middle East. That is not only Iran's view; some 120 countries, members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), share that view (see A/CN.10/PV.355). This morning, through the statement of the representative of Indonesia, the NAM States parties to the NPT deplored that Israel is the only State in the Middle East to refuse to participate in the proposed conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is worth mentioning that in the NAM statement this morning, the 120 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement referred to the NAM Heads of State and Government's expression of

"great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and [their condemnation of] Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals".

I leave it to the representative of the Israeli regime and other delegations in this room to judge whether the account of the 120 countries of the NAM is correct and based in reality, or whether we should believe the Israeli regime's obfuscations and lies.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): The Syrian regime's open file at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is a loaded file indeed as it concerns Syria's fulfilment of its contractual obligations in the field of chemical weapons, particularly with regard, *inter alia*, to process and its declarations on stockpiles, which are under investigation. The nature of the regime's declarations on this point have been described by the OPCW representatives as inconsistent and having gaps and discrepancies. In our line of work, we all know what that amounts to, namely, the deliberate submission of false information to an organ created by international treaty and thus to the international community in general. Therefore, before the Syrian regime's statements can be taken seriously, it must first clear itself in the ongoing United Nations investigation.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.